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Canadian Poetry In English: The Beginnings

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CANADIAN POETRY IN ENGLISH:

THE BEGINNINGS

by

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ABSTRACT

There are now several studies of Canadian literature which offer at least tentative definitions of the country's literary and cultural identity, but none of these studies has based its conclusions upon a comprehensive investigation of Canada's earliest verse written in English. The customary assumption seems to have been that this early work is slavishly colonial and without any redeeming interest or significance. The birth of English-Canadian poetry has been attributed to later productions. This thesis was undertaken to provide a comprehensive description of early Canadian poetry in English, and to contribute to a more thorough, hence more satisfactory, understanding of the Canadian literary experience.

A large proportion of the early verse was published in local periodicals. Newspapers, and to a lesser extent, journals, provided much of the primary material of this study. For example, although verse was composed in the Maritimes and in Lower Canada during the latter half of the eighteenth century, almost none of it was issued in book form. Books of poetry gradually became more numerous as the nineteenth century progressed.

The quantity of verse was directly related to the population of the various regions, and the character of the population affected the character of the verse. Details of settlement therefore became a concern of this thesis, and the variance in these details from region to region, especially in the early years, is reflected in a

natural division of material which has been utilized in organizing this study.

This arrangement is supported by an analysis of subject matter, attitudes, and styles. Maritime verse before 1830 was characterized by an emphasis upon man's spiritual identity. Lower Canadian verse of the same period was pervaded by a sense of man's social identity, reflecting the province's garrison society prior to 1815, and its diminished military character thereafter. The verse writers of Upper Canada, meanwhile, expressed both spiritual and social visions, and also paid greater attention to nature than did those of the other two regions. After 1830, verse from the three areas became less distinct from one another, as sentimentality predominated.

Even when the sentimental and the genteel became pronounced characteristics of Canadian verse, however, that verse continued to reflect the real concern of its makers with their political, social, and natural environments. The dimensions of their political and social visions were more expansive than one might expect, but they were never "colonial" in the sense of ignoring their own time and place. It is certainly true that stylistic originality was lacking - the versifiers were imitative, usually of inferior models - but the concerns and attitudes expressed were sincere and accurate representations of people slowly but definitely developing a literary and cultural identity. Such an identity was never realized during this period but the foundations being laid therein must certainly be recognized by any satisfactory definition of Canadian literature.

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INTRODUCTION

> No one can understand truly the history of this Country, without having become immersed in its early poetry.
> (Lawrence M. Lande, *Old Lamps Aglow*, p. viii)

When Dr. Lande issued this challege in 1957, no one had yet undertaken a comprehensive analysis or even a description of the first century of Canadian poetry in English. Some very general comments had been provided by John Reade in his chapter in *Canada, An Encyclopedia of the Country*, and by T. G. Marquis in his chapter in *Canada and Its Provinces*. A more complete treatment is implied by the title of Ray Palmer Baker's *History of English-Canadian Literature to the Confederation* but this work too fails to deal sufficiently with the primary material to render a satisfactory account of pre-Confederation poetic composition by English-speaking inhabitants of the Canadian provinces. Nor do John P. Matthews' *Tradition in Exile* or R. E. Rashley's *Poetry in Canada: The First Three Steps* give evidence of having undertaken the kind of immersion called for by Dr. Lande. The *Literary History of Canada* has contributed most substantially to our knowledge of early Canadian poetry in English, but more to the understanding of its socio-historical contexts than of its themes and forms.

This thesis was undertaken in an attempt to close the gap. It was motivated by a belief similar to that of Dr. Lande's: that

the precise character of Canada's cultural and literary identity can only be determined by a consideration of our society's whole creative effort; that, in addition, special emphasis ought to be placed in any such undertaking upon the earliest examples of creative expression in the conviction that here is where the seeds of any distinctive identity were sown.

To present a comprehensive description of the total spectrum of early Canadian cultural expression would, of course, be impossible within the limitations of a thesis. I have, consequently, focused upon poetry. Even here, the body of work to be discussed is so large that the closing date for the material considered had to be set two decades earlier than Confederation. The date of the demise of the *Literary Garland*, 1851, has been chosen instead. The choice was not entirely arbitrary, or determined by practical exigencies. It was selected because the character of Canadian poetry had begun to stabilize by that point, and because critical interest has resulted in significant coverage of Canadian poets and poetry after that date.

Another important boundary was applied to this undertaking from its inception. I had originally hoped to compare the work of Canadian writers with that of their contemporaries in both the United States and Great Britain. It became obvious, however, that this could only be done fairly by researching second-, third-, and fourth-rate poets in each of these countries, both through monographic and journalistic publication. Such an undertaking clearly exceeds both the space and time allotted for the completion of a thesis.

Stylistic analyses also had to be minimized. This decision was abetted by the fact that the technical talents of the colonial versifiers were slight. Summaries of the use of elements such as verse forms and metres are given in each chapter and comments upon the appropriateness of style and content are interjected occasionally in the discussion of individual poems, but the reader will find no exhaustive attention to such matters.

Canadian verse composed prior to 1851 has been described in this thesis primarily in terms of its themes and its subject matter. The main concern has been the place of man in the Canadian poet's world vision and that place has been defined through the consideration of such topics as death, religion, nature, romance, domestic affairs, politics, entertainment, personal animosities, and racial attitudes. This examination of the primary material has revealed that Maritime poets prior to 1830 envisioned man as primarily a spiritual being, that their Lower Canadian counterparts saw him as a social being, whereas Upper Canadian versifiers of the same period depicted him as both. As 1830 approached, these visions became more and more similar, culminating in an essential homogeneity after that date, imbued throughout by sentimental moralism. This latter strain predominated espetially in the pages of the *Literary Garland*.

Whether the material is divided by period or by region, an examination reveals that the pejorative designation of it as "colonialist" must be qualified. This rubric has customarily implied a disregard on the part of the colonial writer for his own environment and

a simultaneous adulation of the mother country. Early Canadian verse cannot be adequately defined by a term bearing these connotations. The colonial versifier was always well aware of his environment - natural, social, political or cultural, and in more instances than not he expressed a convincing attachment to his own situation. The eventual ascendancy of sentimentalism did lead to the production of some exile verse but, at the same time that such verse was being produced, and frequently by the same poets, a growing sense of a "Canadian" identity was being developed and declared. By 1851, poets such as Charles Mair, Charles Sangster, and Rosanna Leprohon had begun to speak in tones which cannot ultimately, for all their derivativeness, be described as anything other than Canadian.

No specific definition of a Canadian poetic identity has been enunciated within this thesis. While Canadian verse had progressed far enough for a distinctive tone to be sensed, it had not progressed far enough for the voice itself to be fully distinguished. A definite beginning had been made, however, towards the attainment of such a voice, and this thesis has been dedicated to describing this beginning as comprehensively as possible.

To this end, I have examined much of the extant verse produced by Canadian inhabitants prior to 1851, both in books and in periodicals. I do not claim to have exhausted this material. I am confident nonetheless that I have examined a sufficiently large and representative proportion of early Canadian verse to validate the description of it contained within this work.

In quoting this material I have attempted to maintain the original texts, but many of the ubiquitous printer's errors, and other such mechanical mistakes and irregularities in spelling and punctuation have been corrected in an attempt to provide easily readable texts. Furthermore, since orthography is not a concern of any importance to this thesis, I have not undertaken to note such changes through the use of scholarly apparatus.

CHAPTER I

PRECURSORS

The history of Canadian verse written in the English language begins with the first attempts to establish English colonies on what is now Canadian soil. In the early seventeenth century, several adventurers from England attempted to colonize the eastern tip of Newfoundland. They were immediately opposed by a politically powerful fishing industry jealous of its established hegemony in the area and especially jealous of the shore rights essential to the dry fishery. As a result of this opposition, the plantations did not flourish. Neither did they disappear entirely, but their cultural product, after a very brief "initial flowering," was almost exclusively oral for the next two centuries.

The "flowering" was comprised of only two works, and even the first of these possesses a very tenuous connection with Canadian verse. *The Golden Fleece*, written by the colonial promotor, Sir William Vaughan, and published in London in 1626, is largely a prose work, and the few bits of verse interspersed throughout the body of the volume have no specific application to Newfoundland. Vaughan himself, in fact, never set foot in the new land[1] which he called "New Wales," and in which he saw lying the new "golden fleece." One writer of a prefatory stanza for this volume had actually lived for a time on the Avalon Peninsula.

This man was John Guy, reputed to have been the governor of the first colony in Newfoundland.[2] His verse also declared Newfoundland to be the source of a new golden fleece. Hence the first vision of Canada to be enunciated in English verse by someone who had actually lived here was superficially classical, predictably propagandistic, and prophetically materialistic.

A similarly propagandistic, but, on the whole, less extravagant and less materialistic description of Newfoundland is set forth in the more significant second volume of the forementioned "flowering." John Hayman's *Quodlibets*, published in London in 1628, is a collection of verse composed, according to its title, wholly in the new world. Comparatively few of his lines describe that world specifically, although a number of them are addressed to a variety of the author's fellow Newfoundland settlers. Nevertheless, the few lines which do refer directly to the new environment constitute a vision worthy of notice.

Hayman's purpose was to entice people to the new settlements, and so one should not be surprised to find such encomiums as the following:

> The Aire, in *Newfound-land* is wholesome, good;
> The Fire, as sweet as any made of wood;
> The Waters, very rich, both salt and fresh;
> The Earth more rich, you know it is no lesse.
> Where all are good, Fire, Water, Earth, and Aire.
> What man made of these foure would not live there?[3]

The rhetoric of persuasion is nicely structured here into a compact example of seventeenth century wit, but the character of the new land is decidedly secondary to the manner of the verse. The rhetoric itself, although not nearly as artful, is nevertheless a positive aspect of the

following exhortation addressed to any ladies inclined towards North American settlement:

> Sweet Creatures, did you truely understand
> The pleasant life you'd live in *Newfound-land*,
> You would with tears desire to be brought thither:
> I wish you, when you goe, faire wind, faire weather:
> For if you with the passage can dispence,
> When you are there, I know you'll ne'er come thence.
> (p. 31)

Hayman reserved his most extravagant and most generalized lines for the ladies.

Hayman's characteristic praise of Newfoundland was comparative; that is, he attempted to attract settlers by telling them that the various evils, natural and social, which afflicted their existence in Britain were absent in the new land. He depicted the natural environment of Newfoundland, for instance, as being much healthier than that of the British Isles, even during the already infamous winter:

> You feare the *Winters* cold, sharp, piercing ayre,
> They love it best, that have once winterd there.
> Winter is there, short, wholesome, constant, cleare,
> Not thicke, unwholesome, shuffling, as 'tis here.
> (p. 32)

Hayman also claimed some positive social features for Newfoundland. Life in the settlements was stringent, he conceded, but sufficient physical comfort and sustenance could be obtained, and moreover, there were compensating social and political freedoms:

> Although in cloathes, company, buildings faire,
> With *England*, *New-found-land* cannot compare:
> Did some know what contentment I found there,
> Always enough, most times somewhat to spare,
> With little paines, lesse toyle, and lesser care,
> Exempt from taxings, ill newes, Lawing, feare,
> If cleane, and warme, no matter what you weare,
> Healthy, and wealthy, if men careful are;

With much - much more, than I will now declare,
(I say) if some wise men knew what this were
(I doe believe) they'd live no other where.
(p. 19)

Behind this praise there is a somewhat more realistic note, an implicit admission that Vaughan's fleece was not quite so golden and that it could be obtained only through care and effort. This note is explicitly confirmed by the last verse of Hayman's volume in which he addressed a fellow settler named William Robinson:

How much bad ground with mattock and with spade
Since we were borne hath there been good ground made?
You, and I rooted have Trees, Brakes, and stone:
Both for succeeding good, and for our owne.
(p. 36)

The writer at last gives his readers an indication, albeit slight, that settling, however healthy and rewarding, involves hard, physical labour. But he also closes with the belief that this labour is both immediately satisfying and productive of a promising future.

The first poetic vision of Canada by English inhabitants is therefore generally expressive of the promise of a prosperous future in the new land. One could expect no less from men committed to the settlement of that land, whether they themselves saw the promise and became committed to the settlement as a consequence, or whether they were first involved in the settlement and used the "promise" as a lure to support their investments.

Henry Kelsey, explorer and fur trader, had no interest in enticing colonists to the shores of Hudson Bay when he lived there towards the end of the seventeenth century. He was concerned, instead, with expanding the trade of his employer, the Hudson's Bay Company, and

to this end he undertook a lengthy journey inland in 1690. Neither his prose account nor his prefatory verse narrative contains a flattering depiction of the country which he traversed. For the most part his verse is factual, unemotional description, as exemplified by the following lines:

> Through Rivers which run strong with fall/
> thirty three Carriages five lakes in all/
> The ground begins for to be dry with wood/
> Poplo & birch with ash thats very good/[4]

Such veracity is to be expected of an explorer, and it is the predominant characteristic both of Kelsey's verse and of his various prose accounts of his travels.

The country in which Kelsey spent a significant portion of his life from his early teens onward did exert an impact upon him, which gave a subjective tinge to some of his lines. This impact may partially explain his decision to relate a part of his travels in poetry. In any case, the following lines reveal his awareness of a threat from the land, from its harshness and immensity, and from his own correlative sense of insignificance:

> Now Reader read for I am well assur'd/
> Thou dost not know the hardships I endur'd/
> In this same desert where Ever that I have been/
> Nor wilt thou me believe without that thou had seen/
> The Euynent Dangers that did often me attend/
> But still I lived in hopes that once it would amend/
> And make me free from hunger & from Cold/
> Likewise many other things which I cannot here unfold/
> For many times I have often beeo oppresst/
> With fears & Cares that I could not take my rest/
> Because I was alone & no friends could find/
> And once that in my travels I was left behind/
> Which struck fear & terror into me/
> But still I was resolved this same Country for to see/
> Although through many dangers I did pass/

(*Kelsey Papers*, p. 1)

The threat and the fear of the vast unknown contained in this passage have been persistent notes throughout Canadian verse, as has been the resolute hope expressed in the last two lines above. This vision, even with its desperate desire, represents the dark side of Canadian poetic expression, while the "promise" of Vaughan and Hayman represents the bright side. Between these two, along various points of a wide spectrum, lies the body of early Canadian verse in English.

CHAPTER II

VERSE IN THE MARITIMES TO 1830

Canadian verse in English began to appear regularly in the middle of the eighteenth century when the British government, in possession of Nova Scotia since 1713, determined finally to colonize the province. To this end, Halifax was founded in 1749, and on March 23, 1752, John Bushell's[1] *Halifax Gazette* became the first periodical to appear on what is now Canadian soil. The *Gazette's* second issue contained the first lines of verse from the pen of a local settler:

> May our Rulers prove good, and our people grow wise,
> May all virtue increase, and Vice meet despise;
> May we always have Reason to be cheerful and sing,
> Drink a health to our Betters, and say, GOD bless the KING.
> (*Halifax Gazette*, Mar. 30, 1752)

This was an inauspicious beginning, but the quantity and quality of local verse would grow as the colony grew.

At first, the population of Nova Scotia increased slowly and cautiously. European circumstances dictated that Britain detain almost all of her manpower at home, which meant that the major initial source of Nova Scotian settlement had to be, and was, American. The new colony began life as a hinterland to Boston, a relationship which it retained for a very long time. New England agitation had been a significant force in prompting settlement of Nova Scotia in the first place, and

it was to be even more significant in leading to the expulsion of the Acadians in the mid 1750's. Nevertheless, New England settlers responded hesitantly to the offer of new land to the north. They awaited assurances of the religious and political liberties which they presently enjoyed and which had prompted the retreat from Europe of many of their forefathers. They moved into Nova Scotia in promising numbers only after Governor Lawrence's second invitation extended such assurances.

Pre-Loyalist Nova Scotia never became very large in population. One periodical was sufficient to carry its literary output. Bushell's *Gazette* infrequently contained local verse in its first decade. A slight growth in this production occurred in the 1760's after Bushell's death when his former assistant, Anthony Henry,[2] became the paper's proprietor. The latter gave way to Robert Fletcher[3] and his *Nova Scotia Gazette* in 1766, only to return three years later with *The Nova Scotia Chronicle and Weekly Advertiser*. Henry shortly thereafter acquired Fletcher's paper and merged it with his own to form the *Nova Scotia Gazette and Weekly Chronicle*. He continued this publication with one more change in title (to the *Royal Gazette and Nova Scotia Advertiser* in 1789) until his death in 1800. Local verse gradually became a more consistent feature of the periodical during the pre-Loyalist period, but the output of such verse remained small. Nor were there any independent productions during this period to swell its size. The hymns of Henry Alline,[4] which constitute the most important literary artifacts of pre-Loyalist culture, were not produced in book form until after the influx of the Loyalists, and Roger Viets'[5] poem *Annapolis Royal* was printed by Henry in Halifax in 1788. One cannot even be sure that Viets was a

pre-Loyalist.

The distinctive characteristics of such a small body of work are difficult to define with any precision, especially when Loyalist literature, a larger body with which the pre-Loyalist is most frequently combined, was produced by a people with similar geographical, temporal, and cultural origins. Nor is one aided by the antagonism which the two groups felt toward each other, since this hostility was not articulated in verse. Nevertheless, certain general distinctions, some stylistic, can be discerned in the respective bodies of poetry produced by each group. The tone of pre-Loyalist verse, for example, even when enthusiastic, tended to be less strident than that of Loyalist verse. The puritanic sobriety of the former was more pronounced and its royalist sympathies much less insistent.

The Loyalists, of course, were a much larger group. Their arrival more than doubled the population of Nova Scotia from the eighteen thousand of 1775 as about twenty thousand Loyalists settled in that province alone, while another fifteen thousand moved into Cape Breton, the Isle St. John, and, especially, New Brunswick.[6]

The literary output of the Maritimes was significantly affected by this influx, not so much in character, as earlier indicated, but certainly in quantity, and to some extent in quality as well. The Loyalists brought a body of work with them. Writers such as Jonathan Odell[7] and Joseph Stansbury[8] had participated prominently in the literary war which had been an inevitable concomitant of the martial and political struggle in the American colonies. There they had articulated, primarily in satiric verse, a political and cultural ethos which would subsequently

be a formative influence upon the culture of the Maritimes. For this reason, their work must be, as it has been, considered an essential part of Canada's poetic heritage.

The Loyalist influx quite naturally resulted in the growth of periodical publication in the Maritimes. Several of the immigrants had been involved in the printing trade in the older colonies and were eager to pursue their old vocations in their new communities. Some had been fortunate enough to bring printing equipment with them. The most famous of these was John Howe[9] who arrived in Halifax to found the *Halifax Journal*, and later the *Nova Scotia Magazine*. He eventually succeeded Anthony Henry as King's Printer in the province and published the *Nova Scotia Royal Gazette* from 1800 to 1824. William Minns[10] arrived in Halifax at about the same time as Howe and added a third periodical, the *Weekly Chronicle*, to the city's publishing list. This record was matched for a short time in the late 1780's by the Loyalist centre of Port Shelbourne which boasted the simultaneous publication of the *Port Roseway Gazette*, *Nova Scotia Packet*, and *Royal American Gazette*. The population was not able to sustain this publishing variety, however, and the number of periodicals declined almost immediately. After 1800 the number expanded again gradually and more enduringly.

The history of periodical publication in New Brunswick is more balanced. In 1783, when the colony was established, John Ryan[11] and William Lewis[12] founded the *Royal St. John's Gazette and Nova Scotia Intelligencer* which continued with minor interruptions and under several names until 1807. Ryan and Lewis were challenged in 1785 by Christopher Sower III's[13] *Royal Gazette and New Brunswick Advertiser*, which also

lasted until 1807. By this time, there were other periodicals on the scene to provide constant outlets for colonial literary expression.

The Loyalist influx also gave birth to periodical production in the Maritimes' tiniest colony, Prince Edward Island. Three separate weeklies served the colonists before 1800: James Robertson's[14] *Royal American Gazette*, William A. Rind's[15] *Royal Gazette and Miscellany of the Island of Saint John*, and James Douglas Haszard's[16] *Prince Edward Island Register*.

The oldest Maritime colony, on the other hand, waited longest for the establishment of a press. The reason was not the lack of a public. Although Newfoundland was little affected by the Loyalist migration, it had long possessed a permanent population of some size - twenty thousand by the end of the eighteenth century.[17] The colony's government was hostile to the idea of a press, and even after succumbing to pressure by allowing John Ryan to establish the *Royal Gazette and Newfoundland Advertiser* in 1807, it exerted rigid controls upon him.[18] Before 1830, only two other weeklies, the *Public Ledger and Newfoundland General Advertiser* and the *Newfoundlander*, had enjoyed any success.

Most of the newspapers in each colony contained a poetry column on a fairly regular basis, and included lines from local pens with varying frequency.[19] A constantly increasing body of "Canadian" poetry sprang into existence in this fashion.

This body of verse was not substantially enlarged by book or pamphlet publication. Within the colonies themselves only one such publication, that of Viets' *Annapolis Royal* by Henry in 1788, occurred before 1800. In 1815, John Howe published, also at Halifax, Thomas

Daniel Cowdell's[20] *Poetical Account of the American Campaigns of 1812 and 1813*. Henry Chubb[21] of New Brunswick added James Hogg's[22] *Poems: Religious, Moral and Sentimental* to this small list in 1825, but it was only in the 1830's and later that monographic publication of verse in Canada began to make an important contribution to the country's literary history.

Some colonial writers did have their works printed in the British Isles, and to a much lesser extent in the United States. George Cockings,[23] who was living in Newfoundland at the time of the British conquest of Canada, and who made that struggle the theme of two volumes of bad verse: *War: An Heroic Poem* and *The Conquest of Canada*, had work published in both New and Old England during the eighteenth century. George Cartwright,[24] who came to Labrador in 1770 and lived there for the next sixteen years, had his *Reminiscences* which included "Labrador: A Poetic Epistle" published in England. The most famous work by an inhabitant to be published outside the colony, however, was Oliver Goldsmith's[25] *Rising Village* which was first published in London in 1825. Within a year it was reprinted incompletely in Montreal's literary journal, *The Canadian Review*, but was not issued in monographic form in Canada until 1834.

Towards the close of the period presently being considered, a shift in the flow of immigration to the Maritimes occurred. Greater numbers of settlers now came out from the British Isles, especially after 1815 with the apparent establishment of peace in Europe. Some of the identifiable versifiers among the many pseudonymous Maritime writers now had European rather than American origins. Joshua Marsden,[26] T. D. Cowdell, James Hogg and Andrew Shiels[27] represented this new population

pattern, while the literary eminence of Joseph Howe[28] and Oliver Goldsmith attested to the continuing strength of the American heritage as initially represented by Alline, Viets, Stansbury, Odell, and Jacob Bailey.[29] British romantic sentimentalism, particularly as propounded by Hogg (Irish) and Shiels (Scottish), did begin to make a few tentative inroads upon American puritanism in Maritime verse, but it was the latter which provided the dominant tone of that verse from 1752 to 1830.

Early Maritime versifiers, then, did produce a body of work which is discernibly, though not rigidly, homogeneous, despite their diverse geographical, cultural, and temporal origins. A collation of themes, attitudes and styles reveals that this work was dominated by a pervasive religiosity and didactic moralism. The verse arranges itself conveniently into three general categories parallel to the spiritual, social and natural spheres of existence, with the concerns of the spiritual permeating the social and the natural as well.

These concerns gave the verse a stolid, conservative character which was echoed by the styles used. The monotonous omnipresence before 1800 of rhyming couplet and iambic pentameter or tetrameter was relieved thereafter by a more frequent use of varied rhyme schemes and metres. The new century also saw a greater flexibility in form as ode, ballad, and sonnet became more popular. Lyricism, heretofore confined primarily to hymns, was now occasionally employed in nature verse, but remained an essentially infrequent form of poetic expression. Satire, too, with the exception of that composed by the Loyalists before entering Canada, had little currency. Greater favour was accorded descriptive and dramatic narrative, as exemplified by lengthy poems of Howe, Goldsmith,

and Cowdell. None of these stylistic or formalistic alterations were radical, however, and they effected no great transformation in the essentially sober character of Maritime verse before 1830.

Comments upon verse itself clearly indicate the period's obsession with moral points of view. For instance, the gentleman who contributed the four lines of poetry quoted on the first page of this chapter, prefaced them with a lengthy statement of his concept of proper writing and of a proper newspaper; and declared, in effect, that moral good should be the most important criterion.

> . . . I think every Thing that tends to promote Virtue and Industry, ought to be encouraged, as well as Papers that treat of Humour and Wit, as long as they keep within the Bounds of Decency and Morality. (*Halifax Gazette*, Mar. 30, 1752)

Poetry, in this man's view, should be a force for moral and social good. His opinion is representative of the practice of most of the early Maritime poets.

These writers frequently commented upon the art of poetry, and they agreed that it was a positive social and moral force. The following lines are a characteristic expression of this evaluation:

> Whatever passions tyrannize the soul,
> And agitate the world from pole to pole,
> For all these moral plagues which men endure,
> The Poet's hand provides a skilful cure.
> (*Nova Scotia Royal Gazette*, Mar. 7, 1809)

This assertion may seem extreme to an age which concludes that "poetry makes nothing happen," but it is quite in accordance with the sentiment of its own time.

The conception of poetry as moral instrument and spiritual aid is a concomitant of the early Maritime poet's belief in the intimate

involvement of the Creator with His creation, and especially with man. Since God is always very close, in a protective as well as judicial role, His dependents are bound to acknowledge His presence dutifully and hopefully in whatever manner they can and as constantly as possible. Such a view necessarily affects the poet's choice of materials and his manner of expression. He employs the Bible heavily as a source of allusion and as a source of primary material. He also resorts continually to some form of moral didacticism.

Both of these traits are prominent in the poetry of the early Canadian Maritimes, giving that poetry a measure of similarity to its English counterpart. Bonamy Dobrée records that towards the middle of the eighteenth century in England (the time when Maritime poetry begins, significantly), the "upsurging middle class" were demanding moral didacticism in literature.[30] This demand subsided somewhat in the mother country toward the end of the century but persisted strongly in the Canadian seaboard colonies to 1830 and beyond. Both literatures were morally didactic in a straightforward fashion. Subtle symbols, images and constructions were discarded in favour of direct statement, as shall be seen in most of the poetry quoted below. Because spiritual life was ultimately involved, both that of the poet and that of his reader, the form of verse was inevitably subordinate to the message.

The Maritime verse writers based their certainty of God's intimate involvement in daily life on a variety of proofs. Some, like Henry Alline, rested their conviction upon their own emotional experience:

I'll lift my soul on high,
And sound my Saviour's fame;
He's all I want, and he is nigh,
I feel his sacred flame.

Nor can I happy be,
But when I see thy face;
For Jesus is no Christ to me
Unless I feel his grace.

No distant God I know,
Or future heav'n can trust;
I want my heav'n begun below;
I want a present Christ.

Thou art the sea of bliss,
For which I do aspire;
And when I see where Jesus is
Tis all that I desire.
(Book V, Hymn XIV)[31]

This forceful insistence upon the validity of the individual's emotional being as a criterion of theological reality has almost the force of demanding compliance from God Himself to the writer's view. The vigour of expression is an individual trait and no doubt accounts partially for Alline's success as a preacher, but his interpretation of God's position in the universe is not unique. In addition, his reliance upon the authority of the individual, and especially upon an authority based on emotions rather than reason, identifies him with a number of late eighteenth century religious sentimentalists who were, in this aspect, precursors of Romanticism.

Nature also constituted a source of evidence for the conviction of an intimate Divine Presence. The following writer, for example, expressed the popular belief that even the smallest creatures, in their peculiar talents and functions, are emblematic of the pervasiveness of that Presence. The poet inquired from a firefly the source of its light,

and was told:

> 'Tis from the same all gracious love,
> Which built that canopy above.
> He made me shine, I do his will,
> Thou shouldst his wishes too fulfill.
>
> . . .
>
> Do good to all thou'lt surely find
> Thy blessing in a peaceful mind.
> (*Acadian Magazine*, Vol. I, no. II, Aug., 1826)

Not only does Nature teach the closeness of God to His creation, but also it directs man to an ideal theological attitude and social code of conduct.

The firefly represents Nature's gentleness, but the early writers just as frequently employed examples of Nature's destructive capacities to convey their awareness of God's constant proximity. Storms were popular poetic material in this regard. The frontier settler's vulnerability to the ravages of violent weather undoubtedly imprinted the spectre of storms deeply in his mind. His cultural response to that event is consequently very meaningful, even when, as in the following lines, he subsumed that response under the conventional mode of the literary sublime:

> The awful thunder rolls repeated peals,
> And by its grandeur wakes the careless soul
> To sense of thee, the Author all divine:
> Thee the dispenser of such mighty pow'r,
> To man's dark soul incomprehensible.
> Now fierce and keen the vivid lightning flies
> In course irregular - the blazing heav'ns
> Seem wrapt in flame; the timid earth,
> Affrighted at the scene, beneath our feet,
> Shakes with the strong convulsion:
> Now renew'd with still increasing force.
> It heard the dreadful near approaching sound,
> Which swiftly following the repeated fire,
> Calls up dread apprehension of th'effect;
> Perhaps this moment - as our friend awaits

Instant destruction - by the mighty hand
Of Heav'n remov'd, inseparate to view
Thy rolling in bright realms above:
Or, under covert of some lofty oak,
Th'affrighted cattle find their last retreat:
And in the gen'ral conflict swift expire.
Not so the soul refin'd, the views serene,
The solemn scene around - in wonder lost,
And contemplation of the great Supreme.
Thou whose strong arm supports these numerous worlds,
Rolling the year in periods various:
Thou who canst keep her 'midst ten thousand fears,
Safe from all harm, secure from ev'ry woe,
Thee She adores - and trusting all to thee,
In pious resignation waits th'event.
(*Royal Gazette and New Brunswick Advertiser*, May 14, 1799)

There is much here that echoes Thomson's *Seasons* (the blank verse, heavy diction, deistic moralizing) but the vivid detail and energy of the poet's description seems to rest, to some extent, upon the authority of personal experience, and, as a result, lends impact to the religious event. The sublimity of the occasion is inseparable from either. The purely physical force of the storm was clearly awesome to the poet, and especially so when the idea of the inexhaustible reservoir of a directing omnipotence was added to it. At the same time, the comforting assurance of this omnipotence's beneficence and mercy allowed the poet to appreciate the beauty of the event as well as its message.

This "storm" poem emphasizes the protective powers of the Deity, but, in the course of doing so, also implicitly outlines His destructive capabilities without exhibiting any consciousness of a potential paradox. Henry Alline illustrates a similar lack of such awareness in his Hymn L, Book I, but the following poet who identified himself simply as Mandeville, did display cognizance of this dual nature of God, and without the sense of inconsistency or illogicality that often accompanies such a realization

in the twentieth century. Mandeville, instead, was able to attribute even greater goodness to his Creator because the latter chooses to exercise His positive powers much more than ~~His~~ negative. God's abundance of "natural" gifts to man teaches that He loves man magnanimously and that man should reciprocate to the best of his ability:

My God! when calmly I survey
The beauties of returning day,
My soul is gladdened at the sight,
And wonders at the glorious light,

'Tis thou that ridest in the storm
And winds which nature's face deform;
And yet 'tis thou that still'st their rage
And do'st their angry threats assuage;
Thou guidest the comet's fiery way;
As through the paths of air they stray;
Thou giv'st the Bow its beauteous form
And tell'st it of the passing storm.

How great, Oh! God must be thy power
To teach the sun his constant hour;
To shine around this earthly Ball,
And give impartial light to all.
So grant the truth of light to shine
And warm this careless soul of mine.

Since none enough can praise thy power
The source of blessings ev'ry hour;
Let humbled Man with thanks confess,
Thy *Love* alone is HAPPINESS.
(*Novascotian*, Mar. 15, 1826)

Whatever the considerations involved, the God who directs the course of human and natural events was to the early poets of the Maritimes a consistently beneficent being. Although the Old Testament was more frequently referred to by these poets than the New, they depicted a fundamentally New rather than Old Testament God. Instead of a sternly just, and even vindictive deity, they portrayed one characterized primarily by mercy, one who erased the distance between justice and mercy

by means of an inexhaustible reservoir of grace provided through the sacrifice of His Son.

Christ was, consequently, very important in the poetic imagery of the early Maritimes. His crucifixion was a recurrent theme throughout the period, both explicitly, in the few poems for which it provided a direct, central focus, and implicitly, in those many more poems about Christ in which the event, although unmentioned, constituted nevertheless a major determinant of His stature. Henry Alline, for example, constantly evoked the crucifixion through the formulaic, but vivid, use of the image of Christ's blood, and made Christ the central personage of his New Light theology and hymnography.

Christ's role was not confined in the poetry to this one act alone. Many writers depicted Him as the most dynamic person in the Trinity. They constantly summoned Him to intervene in particular ways on their behalf, and to mete out personally to them the grace accruing from His sacrifice:

> . . . my dear *Jesus* interpose and shield;
> Me, from the traitor, let grace maintain the field.
> Then should revolving years be added more,
> O! grant I may incessantly adore
> My dearest saviour let each accession bring
> More perfect union with my heav'nly king,
> But should the present summons me away
> Before my judge, say dear redeemer say:
> Your precious blood, and agonizing groans;
> Will be my convoy to your father's throne.
> (*Nova-Scotia Gazette and Weekly Chronicle*, Jan. 5, 1773)

Christ was also shown to operate as a less direct agent of spiritual salvation. His nature and conduct were pointed out conveniently as ideals after which man should constantly strive. Perhaps the greatest quality which the poets saw Him embodying was that of humility:

He was the supreme being who subjected himself to the insults of puny, petty man. This, in the estimation of many, was the single most important lesson which Christ, as example, could impart to man:

> O sweet Humility! - can words impart
> How much I love thee, how divine thou art?
> Nurse us not only in our infant age,
> Conduct us still through each successive stage
> Of varying life - lead us from youth's gay prime
> To the last step of Man's appointed time!
> Where should a frail and trembling sinner lie,
> How should a Christian live, how should he die,
> But in thine arms - conscious Humility?
> 'Twas in thy form the world's Redeemer came,
> And condescended to his human birth.
> With thee he met revilings, death, and shame,
> Tho' angels hailed him Lord of Heaven and Earth!
> (*Nova Scotia Royal Gazette*, Feb. 7, 1821)

But Christ was more to most poets than emblem and example: He was director, beacon, and source of spiritual life - "the Way, the Truth, and the Life." He was the only means by which weak man could attain spiritual fulfilment:

> Thou art the Way - and he who sighs,
> Amid this starker waste of woe,
> To find a pathway to the skies,
> A light from heaven's eternal glow -
> By thee must come, thou gate of love,
> Through which the Saints undoubting trod;
> Till faith discovers, like the dove,
> An ark, a resting place in GOD.
>
> Thou art the Truth - whose steady day
> Shines on through earthly blight and bloom;
> The pure the everlasting ray,
> The lamp that shines e'en in the tomb;
> The light that out of darkness springs,
> And guideth those that blindly go;
> The word whose radience flings
> Its lustre upon all below.
>
> Thou art the Life - the blessed Well,
> With living waters gushing o'er,
> Which those that drink shall ever dwell
> Where sin and thirst are known no more;

Thou art the mystick pillar giv'n,
Our lamp by night, our light by day;
Thou art the sacred Bread from Heav'n;
Thou art the Life - the Truth - the Way.
(*Nova Scotia Royal Gazette*, Nov. 28, 1821)

As "pathway," "lamp," and "Well," and as the only gate by which man may achieve access to eternal happiness, Christ was a constant and absolutely significant presence in the life of the universe.

Man's position in the scheme of things was, ~~as the poems~~ quoted above have indicated, a very ineffectual one. Nature and Christ were catalysts to knowledge and positive human action without which man could do nothing on his own spiritual behalf. He was universally depicted in the poetry as an inveterate sinner and weakling who needed the constant direction of his deity. He could not even see the full extent of his self-degradation, though he could comprehend the fact of his damnation:

He saw the last estate and sought
That pardon which can ne'er be bought,
E'en by a sigh - a tear - a groan -
Nor anything that is our own.
'Tis all of grace, for faith is given,
Repentance is a gift of heaven
Which follows faith, for until man
The evils of his heart do scan,
He will not - cannot mourn that sin,
Hath brought him to the state he's in;
And without faith he cannot see
How full his state of misery!
(*Acadian Magazine*, Vol. I, no. VIII, Feb. 1827, p. 305)

Man is here, and elsewhere, shown to be entirely dependent for salvation upon his intervening Lord. Man, inevitably sinful, could not be saved without the grace which follows repentance. But repentance is impossible without full realization of one's sinful state, and such knowledge is dependent upon the possession of faith; which is, in turn, a gift from God. Man is helpless even to believe, as Henry Alline pointed out:

I groan and turn at ev'ry breath,
And fain would fly from sin and death;
But ah! these bars of unbelief
Chain down my soul from all relief.

Far from my help my friends do stand,
While foes conspire on ev'ry hand;
Where shall I hide, where shall I flee
For help, O Jesus, but to thee?

To thee I'd come, O help, I pray,
And take this unbelief away;
Thou mighty God; thou prince of peace,
Give my imprison'd soul release.
(Book I, Hymn II)

Man must await the pleasure of God to direct him to his personal destiny. His only means of precipitating that guidance is through prayer as Alline indicated in the last stanza above. Man's will is a severely inhibited power in this theology. The verse writers were still not far removed from that Puritan determinism which was a significant aspect of their American heritage.

Free will can be exercised positively, however, by man's choosing to pray, and prayer can be productive, not only in the general sense of eliciting the necessary grace for spiritual salvation. It can also bring more particular and more mundane benefits, such as saving a town from destruction by fire:

The Shout of FIRE! a dreadful cry,
Impress each heart with deep dismay,
While the fierce blaze and red'ning sky
Made Midnight wear the face of Day.

The throng and terror, who can speak?
The various sounds that fill'd the air!
The infant's wail, the mother's shriek,
The voice of blasphemy and prayer;

But prayer prevail'd, and sav'd the town,
The few who lov'd the Saviour's name

Were heard - and Mercy hasted down
To change the Wind, and stop the Flame.
(*Royal Gazette and Miscellany of the Island of Saint John*, Sept. 3, 1792)

Man can petition for the beneficial intervention of God, and it will be proferred mercifully. This was a comforting belief to an agrarian society where so much depended upon forces beyond man's control.

The knowledge of God's omnipotence could also be emotionally comforting to the individual fraught with worry about time and mortality:

'Tis sweet, when in some lonely spot,
We're doom'd to linger out our days;
To know that we were not forgot
By him who orders all our ways.

To know that tho' we're doom'd to be
A little season here below -
Yet - we by faith that Heaven can see,
Where joys awhile we must forego.

To know that through the transient hour
Which we are doom'd to pass on earth,
We safe are kept by that Great power,
Which form'd and gave us second birth;
And shall be kept until we see
Time yielding to eternity.
(*Novascotian*, Oct. 12, 1826)

The theme of God's immediate involvement with man extended even into the sphere of political poetry, where it sometimes surfaced in the form of a "God-on-our-side" statement, which was customarily and understandably applied to Britain:

Yet guarded by Almighty power we stand,
Wher'ere we tread, we feel his outstretch'd hand,
Mighty to save, he guides the warriors sword
The impious ruffian trembles at his word.
See fair *Britannia's* just and equal laws,
Devoted to support the rightful cause,
Restrain oppression's full destructive arm.
And all her freeborn sons protect from harm.
(*Nova-Scotia Gazette and Weekly Chronicle*, Dec. 7, 1773)

This particular sentiment received fuller expression in the Loyalist writing of the American Revolution, and even more so in the patriotic poems during the Napoleonic Wars. Colonial writers envisaged these upheavals as attacks upon a divinely sanctioned and divinely directed political and social order. In so doing, they were not simply giving vent to narrow political or national partisanship, but were instead remaining consistent with a very serious and sincere world view. Seen in this light, the following lines composed during the Revolutionary War are not mere nationalistic braggadocio:

'Tis Britain calls: ye nations hear!
Unbrace the corselet, drop the spear;
No more the insidious toil pursue,
Nor strive to weaken what you can't subdue.
'Tis Britain calls: - with fatal speed
You urge, by headlong fury led,
Your own impending fate.
Too late you'll weep, late will find,
'Twas for the glory of mankind
That Britain should be great.

In Britain's voice 'tis freedom calls,
For freedom dies, if Britain falls.

She cannot fall! The same Almighty hand
That raised her white rocks from the main,
Does still her arduous course maintain,
Still grasps the shield that guards his favour'd land.
Obedient to his word,
Not to destroy, but to reclaim,
Th' avenging angel waves his flaming sword,

Revere his awful name!
Repentant in the dust
Confess his judgements just,
The avenging sword shall cease to move.
And where his mercy spares, his power shall save.
(*Nova-Scotia Gazette and Weekly Chronicle*, Dec. 31, 1782)

This outrageously extreme paternalism assigned to Britain was restated during the Napoleonic conflicts when again that nation was

declared to be God's champion of freedom on earth, while republics were predictably painted as damned tyrannies. The composer of one such panegyric ("A Private in His Majesty's New Brunswick Provincials") claimed the evidence of France's regicide to support his view, but, in addition, saw the whole political system of "Democracy" as essentially atheistic:

II.

God's British Agent in this world below,
Gives to Democracy, a pungent Blow,
And sanction'd by th'omnipotent decree,
Convinces mortals *how* they must be *Free*:
Now *Press'd* like *Slaves* to deprecate their *God*,
Or bow submissive to a Consul's nod.

III.

The horrid host of *Massacre* and *Lust*,
Ere long shall sink into their kindred dust,
Those *Pigmy Elves*, of sanctity bereaven,
Of *Heaven* forsaken, and forsaking *Heaven*:
Not long permitted in this *World* to range,
Soon shall evince an everlasting change.

IV.

A Sovereign, murder'd, to indulge their spleen,
A *Royal Martyr*, and a helpless QUEEN;
Poor *Babes* yet speechless have their vengeance felt,
Callous to pity and unlearn'd to melt:
Dashing the *offspring* from the Parent's pap,
And murdering *Infants* on the shelter'd lap.

V.

Nor stopping here - Their *Savage* fury ran,
Beyond all limits of that limit, *Man*;
Daring to challenge the *Celestial Pow'r*,
Denying *His*, the sun shine, or the shower:
Controlling GOD, in every just degree,
And this they *Vilely* term'd *Equality*!
(*Saint John Gazette and Weekly Advertiser*, Dec. 5, 1801)

The national egotism which accompanies this religio-political view may be obnoxious to many now, but is significantly symptomatic of a general outlook on life possessed by this poet's colonial contemporaries.

This same spirit and belief imbue the many encomiastic verses to royalty throughout this early period. The poets insisted that the British royal rulers were more than political leaders and figureheads: they were the divinely selected representatives of God on earth, as the following verse to George II asserts:

> BRITAIN rejoice, loud Hallelujahs sing,
> To that great Power who gave you such a King,
> Whose strong right hand and mighty outstretch'd Arm,
> Wakes for thy Good, and guards thee from all Harm.
> Who's on thy throne a mighty monarch plac'd,
> With every glorious manly Virtue grac'd;
> (*Halifax Gazette*, Nov. 16, 1754)

Below the exalted sphere of political poetry, the concept of an omnipresent deity found continued expression attached to more mundane material. Belief in this concept rendered every detail of man's social and individual conduct important, since his every action was inextricably bound to his all-important spiritual state. Maritime verse reflected this importance in a number of poems which prescribed patterns of morally obligatory social behaviour.

The poets most volubly demanded the exercise of charity, especially in its economic forms. The emphasis is a realistic reflection of social conditions. Life in the colonies was not easy. Despite the promise of plenty held out by Hayman and his colleagues, poverty was a constant spectre of colonization and settlement. In early nineteenth century Halifax, concerts were held for the poor, and for one of them T. D. Cowdell wrote a lengthy poem exhorting the economically secure to act

liberally toward the less affluent, and congratulating those who were already doing so to their own spiritual benefit:

> Friends to Humanity - for such ye are,
> Oh! think ◆ How weighty is the poor Man's pray'r,
> Heav'n marks the heart-felt tear - recounts the sighs
> Reliev'd by you, and pens them in the skies!
> Yes, deeds like this His Blessing must insure;
> For he loves those who love his humble Poor.
> (*Nova Scotia Royal Gazette*, Apr. 28, 1813)

Poets who were less confident that the promise of a future heavenly reward would be sufficient to stir the charitable impulses of the wealthy chose to threaten them instead. Joshua Marsden, for example, reminded the rich that their comfortable station in life rested on insubstantial supports which God could strike away in an instant, and which He was likely to do, not in a punitive fashion but as a legitimate trial of moral fibre. Do, therefore, unto others, Marsden suggested, as you would have them do to you in reversed circumstances:

> Heaven! misfortune sends on all;
> Blessings may have a suspension;
> Tallest Cedars may lowest fall;
>
> All with which you're now delighted,
> (If kind heaven has so decreed;)
> Before nightfall can be blighted,
> You may want - a friend in need:
> Fortunes fickle - like our Lunar,
> He today that's rich and great;
> By to-morrow or much sooner,
> May become - the sport of fate.
> (*Saint John Gazette and General Advertiser*, Dec. 25, 1802)

Marsden's threat is a mild one when measured against the fire-and-brimstone language which he might have used. This possibility was precluded, however, by the poet's fundamental sentimentality which is especially evident in the diction of his poem's final stanza:

Want! - ah give! - Tears! - speak the other,
Rich men have you hearts of steel;
Kind emotions will you smother?
Tender passions never feel:
Down the manly cheek of sorrow,
Let the pearly eye-drops fall;
Mine may be your case - to-morrow!
Want and pain on you may call.

Sentimentality commonly characterized Maritime poems in the first thirty years of the nineteenth century if their subjects concerned human hardship. It was also the mode employed when poets urged citizens to exercise a mercy analogous to that of a forgiving God for a penitent sinner:

Mock not that tear, 'tis all she dare,
'Tis all she can bestow
T'atone for faults which bring despair.
To aggravate their woe.
True she has err'd, yet unforgiven
Let not her errors be;
That mercy lend to her, which heaven,
More hallowed, lends to thee.
Though seas of blood could scarce avail,
Man's empty pardon to obtain,
One single tear-drop can prevail,
With God to wipe away the stain,
That tear is shed, that pardon gain'd,
By the fair one who went astray;
The crime which virtue's page had stained,
Repentance tear has wash'd away!
(*Prince Edward Island Register*, Oct. 4, 1823)

Sentimentality is itself a virtue, it would seem, in this poet's opinion. Even God, moved by the sincere tear of repentance, is sentimental. Man, on the other hand, lacks this virtue (according to lines 9-12), and its accompanying virtues of mercy and pity.

Action alone bespeaks the presence of virtue according to most early Maritime versifiers. Charity, pity, and mercy can have no purely passive, intellectual existence. Disembodied virtue was not credited

in this system of belief. Consequently, all of man's actions, even his most trivial, plus his acts of omission, are significant of his spiritual status. A poem on the conduct of individuals at church is an almost inevitable document, as well as an important poetical statement for this society, with its conventional conclusion that the niceties of behaviour at religious service are profound revelations of an individual's character and of the state of his soul:

> . . . want of decency is want of sense,
> Or if St. Paul's a convertible phrase,
> That want of decency is want of grace.
> (*Royal Gazette and Nova Scotia Advertiser*, Jan. 26, 1790)

Anti-slavery poetry is a weightier product of the belief in an intimate correlation of the social and spiritual worlds. Such poems were long in coming and relatively few in number during this period, but before 1830 verses such as the following were being read from the periodicals:

> Shall man, of little power possess'd
> His fellow worm enthral?
> And rudely from his brother wrest,
> The blessing given to all.
>
> Yes, thus it is, yet not unpaid
> His tyranny prevails:
> And all his barbarous deeds are weigh'd,
> In heaven's unerring scales.
>
> And when the dark and silent grave,
> Its gloomy jaws shall close,
> And the stern master and his slave,
> Alike in dust repose.
>
> Each bursting sigh, each bitter tear,
> Each bosom'd tortured beat,
> Shall then, in black array, appear
> Before the judgement seat.

Then tremble, tyrant of the day,
And shudder at thy doom:
For know, vain man, thy little sway
Is ended in the tomb.

That home the wretched slave implores,
A tenement of rest;
And leads him to those smiling shores,
The island of the blest.
(*Nova Scotia Royal Gazette*, Dec. 17, 1823)

It is noteworthy that in this instance the poet did not attempt to lead the reader to virtuous practice by holding out to him, as most of the poets quoted in this chapter did, the promise of God's love and of an eternity of heavenly joy. Instead, he tried to impel the individual toward right moral conduct by reminding him of the spiritual damnation which he would suffer should he continue to act immorally. He is one of the few poets of the period to outline in verse, even implicitly, an Old Testament God of justice.

Men of the religious vocation in this primarily religious culture (excluding those of Catholic persuasion, of course), were frequently accorded in poetry the status of hero customarily reserved for statesmen and warriors. A lengthy eulogy for George Whitefield[32] published in the *Nova Scotia Gazette and Weekly Chronicle* for May 7, 1771 claimed such stature for that famous English evangelist:

When in his country's cause the warrior bleeds,
The grateful muse records his mighty deeds:
Or when a patriot yields his latest breath:
The sorrowing crowds in groans lament his death,
Shall then the gospel preacher, die, unsung:
To whom superior worth and praise belong?

"Superior worth and praise" belonged to preachers because of their indispensible role in helping the individual to achieve his spiritual salvation:

Permit me then for to esteem the man,
Who from the pulpit does my vices scan,
Reproves, exhorts and points the path to Heaven,
Revives the soul and shews her sins forgiv'n.
When the sick, weak, dissolving body lies,
And rigid death has fix'd the languid eyes;
Then shall the heavenly scene without control,
Open in dazzling triumph on the soul.
(*Nova Scotia Gazette and Weekly Chronicle*, Jan. 11, 1774)

Whitefield was also praised for his ability to bring his listeners to salvation, and his eulogizer went on to describe how the minister was able to achieve his great success. He effectively conjured the sinner by a vivid delineation of the love and sacrifice of Christ rather than by a frightening depiction of the horrors of hell:

When heaven [he] display'd, the good man's heart was glad
Immortal souls transported by his word,
With glowing ardour long to meet the Lord:
Impatient wish'd to drop their sinful clay,
And soar to regions of eternal Day.
Never such foretastes sure of heaven were felt,
As (when he preach'd) God unto sinners dealt,
He spoke of heav'n like one from thence come down . . .

A New Brunswick preacher named Bisset[33] also occasioned a lengthy verse eulogy in which he was praised for an even greater mildness and optimism in preaching than Whitefield. Bisset was quietly unenthusiastic in his style and beliefs. His gentleness of manner and phrase is asserted below to be his chief asset as a preacher:

Unsullied worth like his alone could calm,
The various passions of a fickle crowd,
While warm devotion held the gospel palm,
Inspired the weak and gently held the proud.
Attend ye proud, nor deem the lesson vain,
To mend the heart and soften nature's laws,
His was the task he led the guilty train,
And calmly triumphed in his maker's cause.

. . .

For mild persuasions flowing from his tongue,

Sweet and alluring as the truth he taught,
Resistless eloquence the temple rung,
Both firmly sealed the full effect he sought.
(*Nova Scotia Gazette and Weekly Chronicle*, July 15, 1788)

Bisset seems to have been a most steady individual, and steadiness was considered another central virtue which every good man ought to practise in his pursuit of salvation:

The steady Soul by passion ne'er alarm'd,
Improv'd by judgement and by fancy warm'd;
Whose zeal with reason's rigid dictates sorts,
Glows but not blazes, warms but not transports;
Whose life, which nature's noblest rules control,
Forms are proportion'd, just consistent whole:
'Tis he who does whate'er a mortal can,
Yet sees defects, and thinks himself a man;
Who, what he wants, or ought not to have done,
Nor scorns to know, nor'e'er will blush to own;
Such is the man who fearless yields his breath;
And blest with sweet repose, but sleeps in death.
(*Nova Scotia Gazette and Weekly Chronicle*, Dec. 14, 1773)

The conventional eighteenth century ideal of order which informs this poem did not countenance enthusiasm of any kind. Bisset too is certainly described as unenthusiastic. Whitefield was more ardent, and religious enthusiasm flamed forth briefly with Alline and his New Light followers, but taken as a whole the period under consideration in this chapter gave little expression to this mode in its poetry.

Latitudinarianism was advocated more frequently than religious enthusiasm. It is one of the virtues, divinely sanctioned, which is attributed to Bisset:

No narrow selfish thoughts his doctrine stained,
For charity his arms extended wide,
No casuist doubt strict conscience to refrain,
For heaven born toleration was his pride.

Henry Alline joined in this sentiment, in his preaching, in his conduct, and in his hymns:

Let ev'ry Soul Redeem'd from death,
  Keep near to their Redeemer's arms
And never spend their time and breath
  In warm debates for outward forms.

One man esteems one day to God,
  Another ev'ry day alike;
Yet he that wash'd them in his blood
  Doth in their names no diff'rence make,

One man eats herbs, another meat;
  And who his brother dares condemn,
Since ev'ry Christian is complete,
  And all as one in Christ the Lamb?

The Saviour's cause is never spread
  By a Sectarian name or zeal;
No modes nor forms can raise the dead
  Nor to poor Souls a Christ reveal.

Cease then ye happy heirs of heaven,
  From a sectarian zeal of war;
Your sins are all by Christ forgiv'n
  And it is love fulfills the law.

O think how soon the day shall come,
  When you shall reach the realms of peace,
And find the same eternal home,
  Where discords shall forever cease.
(Book I, Hymn XXV)

God rises above sectarianism, and so should man. The Maritimes had some history of opposition to religious intolerance. The first settlers from the United States, one recalls, extracted an official assurance of religious toleration (for Protestant sects) from Governor Lawrence before they would immigrate to the Canadian colonies.

Latitudinarianism, however, made no place for the religio-philosophies of deism or stoicism. The poetry of this early period seems to contain little outright expression of deism, but it does possess at least one brief denigration of that world view in one of the many poems beseeching God's direct guidance: 'Teach me to shun

the sceptic's path, / And scorn the deist's lore" (*Nova Scotia Gazette and Weekly Chronicle*, Oct. 6, 1772). Stoicism is attacked in like manner in the newspapers at about the same time. Resignation is a persistent theme throughout the early poetry because weak man must await the saving intervention of his Saviour, but this resignation is not stoical, is not based on a concept of a detached Creator as both deism and stoicism are. Such a belief was also odious to these poets because it tended to heighten the individual's reliance upon himself, giving apparent substance to the indictment of "stoic pride" which the writer of the following lines sought to avoid:

> --And far remove me from the Stoic pride,
> That drowsy apathy of joy and sense,
> That deadly langour of the feeling mind,
> Of every bliss the virtuous mind enjoys.
> (*Nova Scotia Gazette and Weekly Chronicle*, Sept. 22, 1772)

Stoicism was also rejected because of its apparent passivity, an unseemly stance for a pioneer society which depended upon the vigorous activities of its members, and for a theological outlook which demanded the active involvement of its adherents.

This involvement was, curiously, not to take the form of an immersion in the affairs of daily life. Quite the contrary. The Creator might stop to manipulate earthly events in order to guide His creatures to salvation, but man was expected to scorn the things of this world in true *contemptus mundi* fashion in order to prepare himself for the joys of the next life. He should attend to the worldly only insofar as was necessary to benefit from divine guidance therein. Otherwise, his attention was to remain directed heavenward:

Teach me with scorn to view the things below,
As gaudy Phantoms, and an empty show:
But fix my mind upon the things above,
As the sole object of a Christian's love.
Make me reflect on my eternal home,
A dying Saviour, and a life to come.
(*Halifax Gazette and Weekly Chronicle*, June 8, 1773)

Earthly existence is ephemeral and insubstantial. Its material phenomena are vain, deceptive, and could be morally destructive:

Vain world, vain world, I bid adieu
To your deceitful joys!
I will not sell my soul for you,
Nor longer hug your toys.

Too long I hugg'd you in my arms,
And counted ev'ry snare;
But now I see your flatt'ring charms
Will end in long despair.

You flatter with a vain applause,
And promise future joy,
When all your pleasures are but dross,
Your bliss an empty toy.

Ten thousand souls by you are slain,
And sunk in endless night;
But ah! too late they rue in vain,
And curse your false delight.
(Alline, Book I, Hymn V)

Life is "transitory pain" and "unavailing woe" (*Nova Scotia Gazette and Weekly Chronicle*, Nov. 24, 1772), or a "dark ocean" and a "thorny round" (*Nova Scotia Royal Gazette*, Apr. 15, 1819). These negatives, however, can also be turned into positives in a paradoxical but thoroughly logical fashion. The hardships and sorrows of daily experience can turn the individual away from the deadly snare of worldly pleasure to the more solid considerations and assurances of a spiritual paradise hereafter: ". . . . all her virtues and her sorrows here / Are pledged assurance of a brighter sphere" (*Acadian Magazine*, Vol. I,

No. III, Sept., 1826, p. 101). Disappointment too can be a beneficially chastening experience:

> Come, disappointment, come!
> Tho' from hope's summit hurl'd,
> Still, rigid nurse, thou art forgiven,
> For thou severe wert sent from heaven
> To wean me from the world;
> To turn my eye
> From vanity
> And point to scenes of bliss that never, never die.
> (*Nova Scotia Royal Gazette*, June 6, 1821)

The poet went on to lament the ephemerality of life, the transiency of beauty, and the vanity of the world, concluding with a statement of religious resignation to the will of God. He thereby managed to summarize the spectrum of themes variously attached to the *contemptus mundi* strain.

Even death itself could be construed as a positive force in this schema. And it needed to be so rendered, for the large number of poems in which it operates reveals that death was an obsessive concern of the Maritime pioneer imagination. The poet who eulogized the Rev. Mr. Bisset countered the challenge of death in the popular fashion of deeming it the gift of God to a virtuous man, a thankful release from the trials of terrestrial existence: "The almighty saw soon snapt the thread of life, / And took him guiltless from a guilty world" (*Nova Scotia Gazette and Weekly Chronicle*, July 13, 1788). Death seen in this light was, in fact, so alluring to several verse writers that they gave vent, still within religious bounds, to a death wish. A mild instance of this can be seen in the following lines:

> Thy children, eager to be gone,
> Bid time's impetuous tide roll in,
> And land them on the blooming shore,
> Where years and death are known no more.
> (*Nova Scotia Chronicle and Weekly Advertiser*, Dec. 19-26, 1769)

The poet who composed the above lines obviously had a concept of a "great good place" beyond his immediate bourne of time and place. He therefore supports E. K. Brown's statement that a colony "sets the great good place not in its present, nor in its past nor in its future, but somewhere outside its own borders, somewhere beyond its own possibilities."[34] Professor Brown was not referring to theological attitudes, however; he was concerned, instead, with political and cultural stances, and in this respect, one must admit that there is a substantial body of "colonial" verse, although not as large and not as simplistically colonial as many critics suggest.

It has already been noted that Britain represented a "great good place" to many colonial Maritime writers. One recalls that some expressed the belief that Britain was the chosen of God, the political, social and moral leader of the world and the only true bastion of legitimate freedom. Numerous poems were dedicated to the praise of that nation's leaders: encomiums to the King and other members of the Royal Family, and to various political and martial figures. Of the latter the figure of Nelson especially captured the poetic imagination. A quantity of bad verse was occasioned by his achievements and death. The verses below on Nelson's victory at the Battle of the Nile are characteristic of the quality of such verse:

I.

"Behold the vaunting Hero,
Renoun'd for War and Spoil,
With all his force advancing,
To seize the fruitful Nile.

IV.

But soon the gallant NELSON
Appears in hostile plight,
And with his British Sailors,
Begins the bloody fight.

. . . .

IX.

Amaz'd with Scenes of Slaughter
Amidst the dreadful fray,
The Democrats for Quarter,
In strains submissive pray.

X.

The Passion of soft pity
Now melts our Hero's Soul,
And Thunders of the battle
No more are heard to roll.

XI.

To their imploring voices
He lends a gentle Ear,
He feels for their condition,
And sheds a generous tear.

XII.

Thus Nelson brings the tyrants
To ruin and disgrace,
And gives repose and freedom,
To half the human race.
(*Royal Gazette and Nova Scotia Advertiser*, Dec. 11, 1798)

As is customary in encomiastic verse, the poem's focus expands from the hero himself to the praise of his whole society and the denigration of that of the enemy. The enemy most frequently attacked in such verse was, of course, France with whom Britain was in constant conflict throughout the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. But the United States was also in open enmity with Britain for a great

portion of this same period, a fact of special concern to the Canadian colonies whose close geographical proximity put them in the Americans' direct line of fire. All of this had a notable impact upon English-Canadian verse at that time. It precipitated in that verse a strain of anti-Americanism which has persisted to the present day, and which began with the very birth pangs of the American nation in its War of Independence.

Many of the first poetic statements of anti-Americanism were the products of Loyalist writers, notably Jonathan Odell and Joseph Stansbury. These men replied to the pro-republican satire of the Hartford Wits with some effective satire of their own, quite often in the same Hudibrastic and Churchillian modes which their antagonists used. Odell's *American Times*,[35] for example, is particularly indebted to Charles Churchill with its frequent use of personification, its evocations of the terrible, and its admixture of serious passages. There are, in addition, some Hudibrastic burlesque contrasts, far-fetched allusions, frequent elisions and feminine rhymes.

Odell and Stansbury also made the patriotic song a telling vehicle for their anti-Republican sentiments. In his "Song for a fishing party near Burlington, on the Delaware, in 1776" Odell celebrated British liberty and order and indicted the rebels for their deluding self-pride and ambition:

> . . .
> True Protestant friends to fair Liberty's cause,
> To decorum, good order, religion and laws,
> From avarice, jealousy, perfidy, free;
> We wish all the world were as happy as we.
> . . .

While thousands around us, misled by a few,
The Phantoms of pride and ambition pursue,
With pity their fatal delusion we see;
And wish all the world were as happy as we!
(*Canadian Anthology*, p. 8)

The argument that the Revolution's supporters were being misled by egotistic factionalists was widely held among the Loyalists and was also expressed by Stansbury. His image of Independence Hall as "Credulity Hall" in the opening stanza of his "Lords of the Main" is especially effective in transmitting this theme.

Stansbury did not focus his attacks only upon the Americans. In his song "God Save The King," written in 1783 at the war's end, he gave voice to the Loyalist disappointment with the British effort by castigating the narrow self-interest of British political leaders:

Time was, in defence of his King and the Right,
We applauded brave Washington foremost in fight:
On the banks of Ohio he shouted lustily
God save the King!
Disappointed ambition his feet has misled;
Corrupted his heart and perverted his head:
Loyal no longer, no more he cries faithfully
Glory and Joy crown the King!

With Envy inflam'd 'tis in Britain the same;
Where leaders, despairing of virtuous fame,
Have push'd from their seats whose watchword was constantly
God save the King!
The helm of the State they have clutched in their grasp
When American Treason is at its last gasp:
When Firmness and Loyalty soon should sing valiantly
Glory and Joy crown the King!
(*Canadian Anthology*, pp. 12-13)

Anti-Americanism was not restricted to Loyalist writers alone. As early as 1776, a Canadian versifier delighted in the American defeat at Quebec in the preceding December. He composed, in commemoration of that event, a song which was published in the *Nova Scotia Gazette* and

which contained the following renunciation:

> I'd rather be laid in an untimely Grave,
> Than live half an Hour an American Slave.
> (*Nova Scotia Gazette and Weekly Advertiser*, Sept. 17, 1776)

American "slavery" (that is, the entire social and political system) was also a favourite theme of other early Maritime versifiers. A non-Loyalist, Thomas Daniel Cowdell, gave the theme its single most complete expression in his lengthy narrative, *A Poetical Account of the American Campaigns of 1812 and 1813*.[36] The narrator of this poem, inseparable from its author, interprets the events of the War of 1812 to 1814 from the viewpoint of one who is regrettably detained within the enemy's borders, but who consequently has the opportunity to observe the society and political system of the enemy quite closely. He finds what he sees most unattractive and conveys this vision to his readers vividly and prejudicially in the poem's opening lines which describe the United States as being ruled by an old harridan and her scrofulous followers:

> Here that mad dame, in her red night cap bold,
> Charms, cheats, and woos, by nothing good control'd;
> No beauty decks her form, with manly stride,
> And filthy hands, to her crime allied;
> Her naked broad flat feet with sandals bound,
> Her bird . . .
> The filthy scavenger of all the land:
> She gives him blood - the nectar of his soul,
> And he returns quick poison to the bowl:
> On this her followers feed, and, raging round,
> They trample sacred beauty on the ground.
> High dignity, and holy order lie
> Beneath her feet, while strife she lifts on high.
> And here for pow'r e'en paltry servants groan.
> (p. 5)

These repulsive characters collectively compose the figure of democratic liberty which, in Cowdell's comprehension, is synonymous with libertinism:

he claims that the United States is ". . . a land so free / That every daring vice is liberty" (p. 5).

Unrestrained and indiscriminate freedom can only produce a corrupt and anarchistic society:

> For freedom, liberty, and equal rights
> And pride of faction every fool invites.
>
> . . .
>
> 'Tis freedom, to be vicious, rude or vain,
> Freedom supports, virtue cannot restrain;
> The chair of State by fraud and vice is gain'd,
> And this supporting prop - must be retain'd.
> (p. 6)

Such corruption and anarchy are inevitable because the equality of individuals is attainable only in its most negative form: ". . . when men are equal, 'tis in crime" (p. 8).

Equality, too, in Cowdell's opinion, destroys any form of meritocracy. It levels negatively by reducing the operative status of capable and talented citizens: they are not permitted (by the restrictive lordship of the masses) the freedom to exercise their capacities to the society's benefit and consequently they seek to retreat from that society:

> . . . where the multitude commands the few,
> The wise and good have little left to do.
> And seek as here, for solitude profound,
> Hating the weeds that choak the healthful ground;
> They have no pow'r in this disorder'd land,
> No equal rights - no share in the command:
> (p. 9)

The masses lack the reasoned intelligence necessary to rule effectively and to rectify any failings in its rule, both of which powers are present in the British system:

> In democratic States, the base will rule!
> And tho' in Monarchies some ills may rise,
> Like hail-stones gender'd in the summer skies,

The cleansing atmosphere will hurl them down;
For worth, and wisdom, guard our ancient crown.
(p. 72)

Lacking a foundation upon merit and reason, democratic rule becomes characterized instead by emotional and tyrannical factionalism:

Here party rage all friendly joy devours,
Shrouds in eternal gloom the social hours,
Divides the father from his virtuous child,
And rages like a muddy torrent wild:
Like their Potomac, when it meets the waves
Of clashing Shenandoah, and hoarsely raves,
Wildly they rush - their troubled waters pour,
Mixing they swell, in one deep troubled flood
Which round the capital exudes in mud;
Within whose walls, in bellowing rude debate,
Exudes the mud and froth of every State.
(p. 9)

Such factionalism is, of course, disastrous if it invades the course of martial activity. Cowdell pointed out how this was true in several battles along the Ontario frontier where undisciplined individualism frequently produced a militarily unfortunate, "every-man-for-himself," kind of conduct.

Cowdell concluded his poem by assuring his reader that his sentiments did not represent any bias against those on the lower ends of the economic and social scales. He conceded the worth of particular individuals and deprecated the unsubstantiated and unwarranted pretensions of others:

Think not I scorn the poor - or low-born worth;
Or look for virtue in high-titled birth,
Ah no! the violet beside the stream,
Or blooming rose that greets the morning beam,
On the wild desert or the mountain's side,
More lovely seems - than all the garden's pride,
Less sullied, and more sweet it drinks the dew,
Cheering with excellence the dreary view:
The garden's gaudy pride rich compost gives,

In purity the mountain lily lives.
The Daw, in borrowed feathers I deride,
Not the wild Goldfinch - singing by his side.
(pp. 136-137)

Cowdell obviously favoured a political and social meritocracy. American democracy did not provide it, but the British scheme seemed to offer the poet some measure of what he sought. His opinion of the mother country was not uniformly laudatory however. He did have the ability, seen earlier in Stansbury but relatively rare among Cowdell's contemporaries, to be critical of Britain. He lamented England's apparent blindness to the American threat for Canada and her relatively spare support to the latter throughout the conflict. The criticism in the *Political Account* was phrased mildly, but the poet uttered a stronger rebuff when he described, in another narrative poem of substantial length, the dissipation of England's port cities. *The Nova Scotia Minstrel*[37] relates Cowdell's journey through the British Isles and his views of them gained thereby. The poem, therefore, bears some kinship to Washington Irving's *Sketch Book* and Major John Richardson's *Kensington Gardens*, in that all three depict a member of a new North American society inspecting an old European parent society, rather than *vice versa*, as was usual at this time.

In this poetic journal, Cowdell recorded that he was born in England, and so, in a sense, was returning home, but he did not describe himself as a longing exile at last touching the land of his birth. If anything, during this journey, he saw himself as an exile from Nova Scotia, or at least from his wife who was still there. This is the kind of exile most frequently expressed in early Maritime poetry: a

feeling of separation from personal attachments rather than from political, social, or cultural environments. Joseph Stansbury's well-known poem, "To Cordelia," addressed to his wife during his brief New Brunswick exile after the American Revolution, also exemplified this kind of exile. In addition, Jacob Bailey's equally noted "A Farewell to Kennebec" graphically demonstrated that its author's feeling of loss was for the results of his own horticultural accomplishments and these depended only peripherally upon a particular national identity.

Only in the 1820's did the theme of exile in any national sense (political, social, cultural and/or geographical) receive substantial expression in Maritime poetry. It was then employed by such writers as James Hogg, whose poem about a young Irishman (himself apparently), who misses his homeland so intensely that he expires almost as soon as he sets foot in New Brunswick, is morbidly sentimental and indicates that the theme of exile may, in fact, be only the artificial creation of literary sentimentality and self-consciousness.

The paucity of exile poetry cannot be attributed to the colonial writer's lack of attention in his work to the immediate phenomena of his own existence. As has already been seen, he does tend to ignore daily life for the eternal, but social, political, and cultural events of a specific nature did comprise the material of a number of his poems.

The socio-cultural pastime of theatre-going, for example, was the subject of several poems. The case against such activity was pronounced poetically as early as 1770, and the writer's argument had, as one might expect, a religious basis in part. Players and playgoers were

deemed immoral because they wasted time and money, the latter of which especially could be put to better uses:

> While Faults on others' Heads to us are shown,
> We view with Pleasure, but neglect our own.
> For had we Sense, since Money is so scarce,
> Should we encourage any Play or Farce?
> And teach the meaner Sort while Trading's dead,
> To give to hungry Dogs their Children's bread?
>
> . . .
>
> What's this to me? perhaps a DIVES cries,
> The Scribbler's Wit, or Satire I despise.
> To visit Plays, my income sure will bear,
> Of Money I have plenty, and to spare.
> Others as wise may plead a good Estate,
> That as their Trading, so their Gains are great.
> Suppose this true; and you have Wealth in Store,
> Is there no HOSPITAL? are there no Poor?
> They who unpitying hear the LAZARS Groans,
> More cruel are than Brutes, more hard than Stones.
> No Scenes of Grief such bad Impressions leave,
> As Reason buried in the Body's Grave.
> To pious uses if your Gold be giv'n,
> You lay up Treasures for yourselves in Heav'n.
> (*Nova Scotia Chronicle and Weekly Advertiser*, Jan. 2-9, 1770)

Playgoers were also regarded as figures of alcoholic and sexual dissipation and their company was therefore to be avoided:

> O fly, dear Youth! the Players subtle Gin,
> Should you admire the Bait, don't venture in;
>
> . . .
>
> . . . view with Scorn, the painted SIRENS Charms,
> Nor hug their putrid Bodies in your Arms.
> From French Diseases, so you may be free
> And not transmit them to Posterity.

This poem is finally more social than religious statement, as its emphasis upon economic motivations for social activity becomes its last consideration. Tangentially, the colony's political reality, its subservience to the mother country, is vividly indicated:

OLD ROME, the growing evil saw betimes,
And wisely banish'd PLAYS and PANTOMIMES.
ENGLAND may say, when it shall reach her Ear,
What a curst set of VAGRANTS we have here,
My sons! great Burthens why did I relax?
If they can PLAYERS pay why not a tax?

The case for the theatre, on the other hand, was expounded primarily in social terms. Playgoing was proffered as a solution to the problem of boring and emotionally depressing colonial winters:

The summer's suns, no more our spirits cheer,
And dreary winter desolates the year;
The pleasing prospect of the verdant field,
To trackless snow too soon must nature yield:
Inclement skies prevent our sports by day,
And tedious nights are spent in cards and tea.
Since such the case, with ardor we engage
To furnish entertainment from the Stage.
Our flipper'd heroes we once more enrol.
To combat all the passions of the soul,
Where gloomy thoughts deject, or eating care
Distracts the mind and drives us to dispair.
Happy the Poet and the Player's art,
Who jointly guide th' emotions of the heart,
And real ills by fancied scenes beguile,
Changing our deepest sorrow to a smile.
(*Nova Scotia Gazette and Weekly Chronicle*, Jan. 11, 1774)

The colonists also countered the social boredom of winter with the pastime of sleighing, agreeable to many (especially for courting purposes), but, inevitably, in such a straight-laced society, objectionable to some. The latter condemned sleighing as a thoroughly frivolous activity. The difference of opinion provoked a small poetic controversy in the *Royal Gazette and Nova Scotia Advertiser* in the spring of 1792. The matter was sufficiently important to the verse writers of the time to produce the following acrimonious attack, perhaps the most vitriolic attack to be discovered in early Maritime poetry:

Your poems *Medicus* and *Fair*
Of feesty compounds are a pair
Your muse did use you very ill,
When, on Parnassus, lacking skill,
She mounted you on the horse with wings
Which under you but f--ts and flings ----
In ancient times an ass once spoke
According to the sacred book:
In modern - we may safely say
Two Scotian poets have learnt to bray. -
If you a speaking ass could find,
It would better suit your vacant mind
Than Pegasus, for in your pother
You might consult your gifted brother:
But if you can't; abuse not sleighing
Dear sirs! with your alternate braying.
-(*Royal Gazette and Nova Scotia Advertiser*, Mar. 13, 1792)

This poem is also a notable example of the kind of satire (that is, personal invective) most frequently found in the verse of this period and region.

Playgoing and sleighing are admittedly trivial material for poetry, but their use as poetic subject matter does indicate the early verse writer's attention to the details of immediate existence. More important indications of such an attention are the lines addressed to concerns and events of a political nature. Such expression occurred early in the Maritimes, especially with the influx of United Empire Loyalists, and especially in New Brunswick. The Loyalists sometimes found conditions in their new territories to be other than those promised, and they registered their dissatisfaction quickly, as in the following poem from an early issue of the *Saint John Gazette and Weekly Advertiser*:

With frozen ink and fretful fire,
To contemplate I did retire;
By various scenes of fortune toss'd,
Lock'd up by one eternal frost

An iron shore, ordain'd by fate,
For Loyalists their last escape;
Pain'd by a scanty meal of meat,
Donations promis'd, all a cheat;
Wrong'd by a set of ravilacs,
Of all but gun, and spade, and axe;
Our Agents too, so very true,
I wish the Devil had his due:
A seven year war, a shameful peace,
Brings us no nearer a release;
Our prime and youth is quite decay'd,
Old age and poverty's display'd;
Friends and relations far from here,
And many things we hold so dear;
No recompence for service past,
The future too, an airy blast;
A piece of barren ground that's burnt,
Where one may labour, toil and grunt;
The choicest tracts for some reserv'd,
Whilst their betters must be starv'd.

. . .

Then now's the time for you to try,
To save your lives and liberty,
Send home what you do labour under,
The British Lion soon will thunder;
His voice will chase each evil spirit,
To that vile place where he doth merit,
And give relief unto the loyal,
He never yet gave a denial.
(Jan. 29, 1784)

This writer directed his attention to a specific problem peculiar to his own time and region, but whatever incipient nationalism might have been contained in his doing so was destroyed by his colonialist vision of the mother country as the purveyor of all solutions.

Complaints such as the above prompted lines of reproof, lines which did not directly rebut colonialist sentiment, but whose insistence upon the merits as opposed to the defects of life in the Maritimes, is more gratifying to the contemporary Canadian nationalist. He may sense a very tiny, implicit note of a future Canada in such lines as the

following, which were obviously composed in answer to the writer of the poem quoted above:

> Tho' jarring pieces our newspapers fill,
> Tho' giddy faction cannot here be still;
> Suspend your fury for a while and see,
> If you can find an inch of room for me.
> A constant reader of your paper o'er,
> I read with wonder your new poet's lore;
> Say, can the poets nothing find to say,
> To chase dissention's horrid thought away.
> Can they not find no beauty in these wilds,
> To aid their muse and mankind's cares beguile;
> Naught but rude malice their new muse can sing,
> Envy and discord found in every line.
> Their country's shame. Say, hath St. John's rude blasts,
> With fierce resentments peaceful thoughts laid waste?
> (*Saint John Gazette and Weekly Advertiser*, Feb. 23, 1784).

The writer of the above lines, a woman apparently (one of a very small number of women writers to appear in print during this early period), desired peace to be a major characteristic of colonial life. Subsequent poetry asserted the fulfillment of her desire. A lengthy poem, entitled "Western Scenes," and published in the *Acadian Magazine* in 1826, after describing and praising several Acadian towns (Port Royal, Windsor, Horton, Cornwallis, Aylesford, and Bridgetown) for their pastoral beauty and tranquility, closes with the inclusion of peace as one of the major blessings of the province:

> Grateful to Heaven for her unbounded store
> Of choicest gifts that bless our native shore,
> For Peace whose angel-wings have hovered near,
> And kept far from us war, - its guilt, - its fear;
> For Health and Plenty, jewels rich and rare,
> Tho' competence alone, not wealth, we share;
> For lovely scenes that warm our hearts to home,
> Not suffering far or long from friends to roam;
> For maids with rosy cheek and dark blue eye,
> That cause the throbbing pulse, the long drawn sigh;
> For all that gives an honest native pride,
> Our humble rhyme to faintly sketch hath tried.
> (*Acadian Magazine*, Vol. I, No. III, Jan. 1827, pp. 241-248)

The customary additions of health, plenty and natural beauty fill out the poet's list of native blessings, but he also displayed a special delight in being able to term himself a "native" of this land. Poets were now indicating a nationalistic pride in having been born in the Maritimes. Witness the following "Ode";

> Far dearer far to me Acadia's land,
> Varied with rich prairies and forests wild,
> Than other climes; whether the classic strand,
> Where erst immortal Poets sang, or warlike band
> To gain a name for some proud hero toil'd,
> Or modern soil, where riches most abound,
> With arts and science, ease and splendor crown'd.
>
> And why so clear this spot of little fame.
> O'er half of which the savage roam at will,
> Which bears in history no shining name,
> Whose sons to highest station have no claim,
> And but a few are call'd those posts to fill
> On martial field or deck where blood is shed;
> (Though when so plac'd they've nobly fought and bled.)
> Then why so dear? See peace and plenty reign
> Within our confines, cheering every heart;
> Here rich variety, o'er hill and plain,
> Of meadows green and fields of waving grain,
> To freedom's sons a competence impart;
> Here equal laws protect from fraud and crime;
> But more than all, - this is my native clime!
> (*Acadian Magazine*, Vol. I, No. II, Aug. 1826, p. 58)

Two decades earlier than either of the above poets, another verse writer celebrated the Maritimes for their peacefulness, and in so doing indicated a slight degree of independence from colonial subservience by using Europe as a negative pole against which to judge New Brunswick:

> Great Lord of all, New-Brunswick humbly prays,
> Thy kind acceptance to her feeble lays;
> Suppliant she bows, to thee she now repairs,
> To own thee Author of her constant years:
> Her constant years with num'rous blessings blest,
> No Wars nor Pestilence her sons molest:

Commerce expands from her prolific shore,
And peaceful olives wave within each door;
Not so Europe's climes where Wars alarms.
(*Saint John Gazette and Weekly Advertiser*, Jan. 6, 1806)

T. D. Cowdell also employed a comparative technique in praising the Maritimes, but he made his comparison much more specific and much more aggressively non-colonial by a criticism of aspects of English society:

O London! pav'd and lighted! might it be,
That Halifax may shine as bright as thee,
Except in watchmen's lanthron, eyes and rattle,
Night-mares and constables, with other cattle . . .
(*Nova Scotia Royal Gazette*, July 15, 1812)

His criticism is not extravagant but it is pertinent and his succinct expression of it lends added impact. His praise of Nova Scotia in the following lines is also not extravagant, and although he used a well-established rhetorical stratagem of eliciting his particular message from an old adage, the relative brevity of the passage enhances its reception:

Such lands have blessings of their own.
Yes, though a ruthless, rugged coast,
The best of blessings it can boast.
Look not on its surrounding sphere,
Nor credit all accounts you hear.
Environ'd with forbidding views,
You may, at first, her shores refuse;
Internal beauties soon relieve
What crude exteriors oft deceive.
So bodies rough of shapeless mould,
The choicest spirits may enfold;
(*The Nova Scotia Minstrel*, p. 11)

Whether exaggerated or honest, the poet's praise of his province was an early and continuing fact of Canada's cultural history, and one not adequately contained within the definitions of Canadian colonialism offered thus far. At the very least, early "nationalistic" poetry

displays some degree of introspection in the provincial poetic vision.

Beyond the social and political verse already noted, there is little poetic expression which does not exemplify the religiosity previously delineated at length. There is, for instance, very little poetry concerned with interpersonal relationships on a non-religious level. There are several poems advising how to choose, or to be, a good (morally) husband or wife, but there is very little verse of a purely romantic nature. Even when a light-hearted statement of sexual attraction is found, one may also discover religious material accompanying it:

> An Apple caus'd our present state,
> And by inevitable fate,
> Condemn'd us all to die;
> But if that Apple was so fine
> And came from such a hand as thine
> Who from its charms could fly.
> Then why should I old Adam blame,
> When I myself had done the same,
> Had you the Apple given;
> I should like him, without dispute
> Have eaten the forbidden fruit,
> And lost for you a Heaven.
>
> (*Royal Gazette and New Brunswick Advertiser*, Oct. 1, 1799)

The religious material may be used non-religiously but the very fact that it is found in such a poem indicates the thoroughness with which religion dominated the early Maritime imagination.

One similarly discovers that there are few poems in which Nature does not operate as an emblem of religious or moral truth. Almost the only instance in which Nature was presented without reference to a religious or moral code is in George Cartwright's "Labrador: A Poetical Epistle." Cartwright, by his own admission an avid hunter, regarded Nature as a superabundant storehouse of game:

If you love sporting, go to LABRADOR:
Of game of various sorts, no land has more.
There you may suit your Taste, as you're inclined,
From the fierce White-Bear to the timid Hind.
Of Fishing too, you there may have your fill:
Or in the Sea, or in the purling Rill.
Of feather'd Game, variety you'll find,
And plenty you may kill, if you're not blind.
(p. 5)

This absence of moral commentary was exceptional, however, and even late in the period the vogue for purely descriptive nature poetry had little following in the Maritimes. Joseph Howe came as close to such a mode as anyone, but even he did not escape the demands of religiosity in such poems as "Sable Island."

The figure of the North American Indian, child of nature *par excellence*, found little place in the early poetry without an accompanying moral statement. When he appeared, as he often did, in the guise of the purely destructive savage, as in Goldsmith's *Rising Village*, his moral function was clearly to aggrandize the virtues, religiously derived, of the colonists. When a poet, such as Cowdell, attempted to portray the Indian as a positive figure, he frequently had reference to conventional Christian terms. Cowdell said that he "never saw an Indian thief," had encountered only one prostitute, one murderer, and few adulterers. He concluded, therefore, that the Indian was of a "harmless, chaste, and upright race" (*The Nova Scotia Minstrel*, pp. 20-21). Even a writer more successful in seeing the Indian on his own terms retained some sense of moral approval in his estimation, as in the following poem in which the Indian's virtues - his physical strength, his fortitude, and his courage - are perfectly compatible with a religious vision:

The Song of the MicMac

Oh! who on the mountain, the plain, or the wave
With the arm of the Micmac will dare to contend;
Who can hurl the keen spear with the sons of the brave,
Or who can the bow with such energy bend.

Who can follow the Moose, or the wild Caraboo,
With a footstep as light and unwearied as he;
Who can bring down the Loon, with an arrow as true,
Or paddle his bark o'er as stormy a sea.

Who can traverse the mountain, or swim the broad lake,
Who can hunger and thirst with such fortitude bear;
Or who can the Beaver as skilfully take,
Or the Salmon as nimbly transfix with the spear.

And if the wild war whoop ascends on the gale,
Who can with the Micmac the tomahawk wield;
Oh! when was he known in the combat to quail,
Who e'er saw him fly from the red battle field.

Free Sons of the Forest then peal forth the song,
Till each valley and rock shall victory tell;
And the ghosts of our Heroes, while flitting along
With triumph will smile on the spot where they fell.

(*The Mercury*, Mar. 21, 1826)

Religiosity pervaded all in Canadian Maritime verse between 1750 and 1830; its sobriety affected even the style. In these respects, the colonial versifier was merely following faithfully his models. These models, British of course, were not imitated by the provincial versifier simply because he was "colonial" in outlook, but because he was dominated by popular tastes like British poets of comparable quality he chose facile, but popular models such as Charles Dibdin, Felicia Hemans, James Montgomery or Thomas Moore. Later in the period Burns and Byron appear as exemplars but without any particularly ameliorating influence on the quality of the verse, perhaps because Mrs. Hemans remains the single most dominant force. There was no cultural time-lag in the following of these models; there was merely an unfortunate choice of

models to emulate.

In quality, then, early Maritime verse has its counterpart in the contemporaneous third- and fourth-rate poetry of the British Isles. The intellectual content of the Maritime muse, therefore, constitutes our primary interest, because although such content is unexceptional, a knowledge of it helps us to understand the early society and culture of Canada which have shaped her present.

CHAPTER III

POETRY IN LOWER CANADA TO 1815

English-Canadian poetry in the province of Quebec, or Lower Canada as it was known officially from 1791 to 1841, also had its beginnings in the pages of local newspapers. As in the Maritimes, verse composed by local inhabitants appeared almost simultaneously with the establishment of the first weekly. Both of these occurrences closely followed the British conquest of Quebec which was completed in 1760. On June 21, 1764 only twelve years after the founding of the *Halifax Gazette*, the *Quebec Gazette* became the second newspaper of what is now the Dominion of Canada.

English-Canadian poetry in Quebec has always been the articulation of a small group of the province's total population, and this was especially true in the years prior to 1815. During this period the English-speaking inhabitants of Quebec constituted a garrison society in several respects. First of all, a large percentage of the 600 immigrants who arrived in the first few years[1] were either military personnel or civilians whose livelihood depended directly upon the military (the latter were comprised particularly of merchants engaged in supplying the army and of civil servants administering for a regime which remained primarily military in character and outlook).

All British inhabitants were, in addition, peripherally dependent upon the military to the extent that they made up a small society of conquerors infringing physically and culturally upon the territory of a quiescent but nevertheless reluctant, and vastly more numerous, subject people.

This numerical imbalance was not significantly altered before 1815. Immigration from Britain was inhibited by the home country's need for manpower in its constant struggles on the European continent. The Loyalist migrations, so significant for the Maritimes, had little impact upon Quebec. The most noteworthy instances of Loyalist settlement occurred in the Gaspé region and at Sorel, each area attracting about 500 settlers.[2] Greater numbers passed through the province, but by 1792 the steady trickle of primarily Scottish immigrants and a few Loyalists had increased the English-speaking population of Quebec to a mere 10,000. By comparison, the French population had expanded, without the benefit of immigration, from 65,000 to 145,000 in 1792.[3] This pattern did not change in the next two decades.

The role of ruling minority undoubtedly possessed psychological and economic satisfactions, but it also inevitably exerted some psycho-cultural pressures which were not at all beneficial to the ruling class. The English have always enjoyed economic supremacy in Quebec, but they have not enjoyed it in the comfort of unassailable security. Instead, their relationship with the French has been characterized consistently by an aura of mutual distrust and discomfort. At no time has this aura been more pronounced than in the first fifty years of the relationship. At that time, an English garrison society was very much a psycho-cultural

as well as a physical fact.

Such was the milieu in which English-Canadian verse of Lower Canada passed its formative years. The impact of that milieu upon this verse was considerable. One of the first notable manifestations of that impact was the acknowledgement afforded the province's demographic reality by several of its early journalists when they undertook to appeal to both races by making their papers bilingual. The *Gazette's* proprietors, William Brown[4] and Thomas Gilmore,[5] took the lead in this respect, and their policy was pursued by later Quebec publishers such as Fleury Mesplet,[6] whose *Montreal Gazette* came into existence in the summer of 1785, and William Moore,[7] whose *Quebec Herald and Universal Miscellany* appeared on November 24, 1788. This bilingual policy never prevailed in any general way, however, as most subsequent periodicals in Lower Canada tended to be unilingual.

As has already been seen, the American War of Independence did not affect the demography of Lower Canada in the same way that it did that of the Maritimes. Neither did it have an impact upon the literary history of the province equal to that exerted upon the literary history of the Maritimes. The Loyalist migrations brought a number of new printers to the latter area and immediately produced new periodicals; nothing like this happened in Quebec. One might credit the American War of Independence with having prompted the eventual appearance of Mesplet's *Montreal Gazette*, although that paper was not established until ten years after the Continental Congress sent Mesplet to Montreal. He was certainly not a Loyalist. William Moore of the *Quebec Herald*

may have been, but no evidence is presently available either to support or to refute such a claim. Only three other periodicals appeared in Lower Canada before 1800, and none of these can be attributed to a Loyalist stimulus. *The Times* of John Jones ran from 1794 to 1795 and was produced by an even more mysterious figure than Moore. Samuel Neilson who produced the *Quebec Magazine* from 1792 to 1794 was the nephew of William Brown and had come from Scotland to take over the *Quebec Gazette* when Brown died in 1789. The third paper was a competitor for the *Montreal Gazette*, and was issued for a year (1795-96) under the same title by Louis Roy,[8] a French-Canadian printer who had worked for Neilson, and who had been employed for a short time by Governor Simcoe to issue Upper Canada's first newspaper.

The expansion of the press in Lower Canada was not spectacular but the local inhabitants participated more avidly in producing verse for their newspapers than did the Maritime settlers. An examination of the extant copies of these newspapers indicates that Quebec editors quoted fewer lines from British and American sources, seeming to prefer no poetry to such quotation. They did, however, print a sizeable amount of eighteenth century native verse. Their presses also produced at least two poetic pamphlets prior to 1800: William Brown printed Thomas Cary's[9] *Abram's Plains* in 1789 and John Neilson printed Stephen Dickson's[10] *The Union of Taste and Science* in 1799. A third pamphlet poem written by an inhabitant of the province was printed in London in 1797, namely J. Mackay's[11] *Quebec Hill*.

The province's publication record did not change significantly in the first decade and a half of the new century. Only one more volume

of verse seems to have been published during those years, that being Cornwall Bayley's[12] *Canada; A Descriptive Poem, Written at Quebec, 1805.* Newspapers remained the primary organs of verse publication, and their number was slightly increased in the early years of the century by such journals as Thomas Cary's *Quebec Mercury*, begun in 1805, Nahum Mower's[13] *Canadian Courant and Montreal Advertiser*, founded in 1807, and William Gray's[14] *Montreal Herald*, established in 1811.

The national origins of the identifiable literary figures of Lower Canada (few though these are), combined with the knowledge of the general outlines of immigration and settlement in that province prior to 1815, indicate that its literary heritage was not primarily American, as was that of the Maritimes. After the early years of Brown, Gilmore, and Mesplet, the United States seems to have contributed little to the demographic and cultural character of Lower Canada. Some New Englanders moved into the Eastern Townships after 1791 in response to the lure of cheap land, but there is no evidence that this group distinctly affected the character of early English verse in Lower Canada.

A more discernible impact was exerted by the Scottish settlers who, often in response to the lure of the fur trade, consistently increased the English speaking population of Lower Canada throughout the period under consideration in this chapter. Their presence is most obviously indicated by the number of native poems written in Scottish dialect. The Irish, who were to be conspicuous contributors to the verse of Lower Canada following 1815, were for the moment only minimally represented; Stephen Dickson is the only Irish verse writer

of this early period in Lower Canada who can presently be named, and he did not stay long.

The geographical and cultural origins of the early creators of Lower Canada's poetry are not quite so diverse as those of early Maritime verse writers, nor is the time span considered here as extensive as that which formed the unit for the previous chapter. Consequently, the rough homogeneity of this portion of Lower Canada's verse is the more easily recognized. And the dominant character of this poetry is markedly different from that of Maritime verse. Its overwhelming focus is upon man as a social rather than as a spiritual being. Poems on political events, personalities and concerns, on social events and social conduct, on romantic and sexual love, on woman and matrimony, greatly outnumber poems on religious themes and figures. Moreover, the moral tone and message which normally accompanied Maritime poetry on socio-political themes is generally absent from such verse in Lower Canada.

This disparity may well be attributable to the differing characters of the populations of each region. As has already been pointed out, Lower Canada's English-speaking society was comprised primarily of people in or associated with the military, and secondarily of people involved in or associated with the fur trade. Their lives, in other words, tended to be guided more by action than by reflection, and when they did reflect, it was not then unnatural that their reflections were concerned with the immediate nature and consequences of action. The different relative emphases upon action and reflection are of minimal

help in distinguishing between frontier societies where the importance of action is necessarily great, but this distinction does receive corroboration here by the fact that verse in Lower Canada was less often the product of ministerial pens than it was in the Maritimes, and was more often composed by members of the military or by the professional journalists.

The human emphasis dictated no particular style or tone, but it did lead to the production of a substantial quantity of humorous and satiric verse throughout the period. Much of this, as well as of the more sober verse, was composed in couplets of iambic pentameter, but some variety was attained with the occasional appearance of trochees, anapests, varied rhymes, and some blank verse. Correlatively, ballads, songs, odes, and sonnets occurred more frequently than in Maritime verse, although these forms were not really numerous until after 1815.

Lower Canadian weeklies, as was said previously, did not reprint poetry from England and the United States as often as did their counterparts in the Maritimes, and thus it is not quite so easy to ascertain who were the immediate models for Lower Canada's versifiers. It is clear from the kind and quality of the verse produced, however, that the ultimate progenitors were the literary gods of the eighteenth century such as Pope, Goldsmith, Gray, *et al*, and that likely these sources had been transmuted through such lesser writers as Akenside and the Wartons. Of the English writers whose work was reprinted in the colonial journals, the Dibdins were the most popular, indicating that the models may not even have been as good as second-rate.

The primarily social outlook of Lower Canadian verse is indicated in the few lines to be found which comment upon the role of poetic composition. Writing was still regarded as a moral instrument:

> In my mind's eye nought's worth the printing,
> Without some moral or good hint in:
> The test of sense, in this view lies, Sir,
> To make men better or the wiser.
> (*Quebec Gazette*, Feb. 24, 1785)

But even where religion was associated with writing, as in the following lines, the latter received only cursory mention, and the native poet passed on to detail an ideal relationship between man and his fellow men without reflecting overtly any spiritual obligations or consequences:

> From foolish subjects, O my pen, keep free,
> With ill-timed satire ne'er conversant be;
> Immodest words admit of no defence,
> And want of decency is want of sense;
> Religion's tenets be thy constant care,
> But in disputes be candid and sincere;
> True love to mankind in your writings show,
> Nor vent thy spite and malice 'gainst thy foe;
> Defend your cause with all the skill you can,
> And though you hate his errors, love the man;
> Let every injur'd fair in thee still find
> A wise protector, and a steadfast friend;
> That young and old may in thy praise combine,
> The virtues of humanity be thine.
> (*Quebec Gazette*, Jan. 25, 1770)

The "virtues of humanity" may be ultimately God-given or heaven-directed, but this poet did not say so explicitly, and the result is a focus upon man which the religiously-oriented Maritime poets might very well have found alarming. It is a focus, however, which generally characterized the practice of Lower Canadian poets.

Verse of this period sometimes criticized styles of composition, but the criticism was seldom, if ever, based on moral grounds. Most

often the mode employed was that of personal invective exchanged between individuals and groups with both sides indulging in acrimonious and scurrilous doggerel, primarily impugning each other's intelligence. Several such exchanges can be found in the pages of the *Quebec* and *Montreal Gazettes* prior to 1800. They were very infrequent thereafter.

In an essentially man-centered body of poetry, one might well expect to find some attention paid to the contemporary scene. The early verse of Lower Canada paid that attention, not only in the personal invective just mentioned, but also in a number of poems devoted to political themes, events and personalities. Many of these poems are encomiums to Britain and to her military leaders, but to claim that this indicated an unwarranted colonialist tendency to ignore one's own environment in preference for that of the mother country is to hold a much narrower view of a colony's environment than the colonists held. They realized that their environment was inescapably international in scope. They were well aware, the English-speaking population of Quebec intensely so, that their own fortunes were extremely dependent upon those of Great Britain. Realistically, they could not possibly defend themselves without external assistance nor operate autonomously, for their very existence as British colonies could be destroyed as easily by a battle in far-off Europe, or by signatures on a peace settlement, as it could by martial campaigns in North America. In these circumstances, poems of praise for the mother country take on the aura of political acts, however miniscule, and of psychological necessities for dealing with a very insecure existence.

Despite their insecure position, one could not expect the English-speaking settlers of Quebec to relinquish their sense of British identity. Most of them had arrived too recently from the British Isles to be able to do so; even the American colonies had required a century of connection before being impelled towards separation. Furthermore, the predominantly French population of Quebec, in their presence alone, constantly reminded the English of their own identity. This does not mean that the English settlers formed a solidly homogeneous community; they did not do so. But they were generally agreed on their attachment to Britain and to the Crown.

The verse writers of Lower Canada did not justify this attachment in quite the same way as did the verse writers of the Maritimes. Rather than insisting that Britain was the divinely sanctioned leader of the world, the poets of Lower Canada hailed British society and government as ideal because they exemplified the order of nature. This view, paradoxically, was best propounded by one who resided in Canada for a very short time and whose sincerity must be suspect because he had been recently involved in a rebellion against British rule; nevertheless, his lines do express the characteristic attitude of the province's poets. Stephen Dickson, neatly blending the ideas of Bernard de Mandeville and Pope in *The Union of Taste and Science*, compared Britain to the "well ordered kingdom of the bee":

> There no licentious demagogues declaim,
> (For self and social interest are the same,)
> No forc'd equality insults the laws
> Of various worth and rank that Nature draws;
> In every breast a love of order glows,

The bond of patriots, and the scourge of foes;
Though rich industrious, though loyal free,
And such, O Britain! as thou still may'st be.[15]

Nature's order is an hierarchical order which accommodates the obvious fact of life's variety, and permits everything the freedom to realize itself within its own proper, and carefully designated, sphere. Anything which exceeds its own natural bounds can only do so at the expense of some other thing. The latter's freedom to fulfil itself ~~is consequently destroyed and the entire system~~ is ~~anarchically~~ disrupted. Such was the rationale which supported the poets of Lower Canada in their encomiums to the hierarchical, socio-political system of Britain, and in their excoriation of other political systems, especially of the Napoleonic order of France and of the democracy of the United States. Britain provided the only true freedom; France and the United States enslaved their peoples with their unnatural organizations.

Napoleon, of course was a favourite target of attack as a tyrannical enslaver of peoples. Before he was ultimately removed from power in 1815, his threat to England and to her colonial possessions was an extreme one, and evoked some extreme poetical depictions of which the following is an example:

Grovelling Slav'ry, with her galling chain,
Dark Treach'ry that often looks behind;
Shame, Rage, and Blasphemy, a cursed train,
Despair and mad Ambition always blind.
This hellish crew a bloody car attend,
And o'er their shoulders gaping scorpions bend;
The chief within, whom Virtue ne'er restrains,
As trembling Murder guides the clotted reins,
With anguish wreathes to see yon happy clime
That mocks his arts, defies his power,
And promises an evil hour:

I follow close the despot's eyes,
And Albion's rocks before me rise,
Where nature wears her sweetest smile,
Intrepid Freedom's favour'd isle,
Where men, disclaiming slavish sway,
No vile oppressor's will obey:
Where reigns a king, whose virtue shines
A damning contrast to the tyrant's fame;
At this, in secret, he repines,
But gnawing envy grows from shame.
(*Quebec Mercury*, June 5, 1809)

It is noteworthy that neither God nor religion is explicitly referred to in the above comparison, either to the glory of Britain or to the denigration of France and Napoleon. There are, obviously, religious and moral overtones to the description of Napoleon as a hellish fiend, and to the reference to the British King's virtue, but the actual terms of indictment and praise are primarily social. Praise and blame are meted out to each leader on the basis of his conduct toward his fellow man, and this in turn is evaluated by the pro-British standard of natural freedom which was described earlier.

The United States was the second major combatant for England during this period and was the one, owing to proximity, of greatest concern to the English colonists in Quebec. Hostilities with the United States in the American Revolution and in the War of 1812 to 1814 produced a number of poems. The native writers of Lower Canada celebrated in verse their victories, such as Montgomery's rebuff at Quebec in the winter of 1776, and the failure of Hampton's and Wilkinson's military incursions into Lower Canada in the War of 1812. The Americans were depicted as enemies to order and freedom. From the Canadian point of view, Montgomery and his "rebel" invaders were

skulking dastards, intent upon the destruction of a free and lawful society, rather than brave soldiers fighting for a glorious cause:

MONTGOM'RY with his Rebel Band,
Invaders of this peaceful Land,
Wrapt in the Shade of Night's impervious Gloom,
Intent to bury in one common Tomb
Our Laws - our Freedom - came prepar'd;
Whilst with indignant Scorn
And Patriot zeal elate,
We hail'd the welcome Morn.
That hastened on their Fate,
For soon th' Almighty's piercing Eyes,
Which look thro' all Things at a single View
Saw, and dispers'd the Gloom - the Shades withdrew -
The REBEL starts appal'd, and in a Moment dies. -
(*Quebec Gazette*, Jan. 2, 1777)[16]

On this occasion the victory was attributed to divine intervention, but this is one of a very few statements of the "God-is-on-our-side" theme to be found in the verse of Lower Canada.

The defeats of Hampton and Wilkinson during the second invasion of Lower Canada in 1813 were credited to purely human factors: the lack of military fibre in the Americans, and a stout and heroic will in the hearts of the defenders:

From our Port and Madiera cow'd Jonathan turn'd,
Nor courage could muster to face our fair lasses;
But to his own blunders sneak'd home to be spurn'd,
And seek consolation in rum and molasses.
(*Quebec Mercury*, Nov. 9, 1813)

Two campaigns are past and intact we remain,
With hearts firmly knit as bucklers, of steel;
Our hearths and our altars resolv'd to maintain,
And to make rash invaders our vengeance deep feel.
(*Quebec Mercury*, Nov. 23, 1813)

The writer of the first of the above verses mocked the Americans somewhat facetiously, but the critical view of the United States' socio-political philosophy and organization upon which this mockery was based

was not at all facetious. It has already been pointed out that early Canadian poets regarded any order other than British hierarchical order to be false and unnatural. In keeping with this view, democracy was believed to be essentially anarchic and enslaving. Even one of the very few poets to proffer the hand of friendship and forgiveness to the southern colonies in the early stages of their war of independence asserted that they were mistakenly motivated, spurred on by the irrationality and chaos of enthusiasm. He addressed the separating brethren with condescension but also with sincerity in the following impassioned and rhetorical lines:

> For you we have the kindred groan,
> We pity your misfortune, and your crime,
> Stop, parricides, the blow;
> O find another foe!
> And hear a parent's dear request,
> Who longs to clasp you to a yielding breast.
> What change would ye require? what form
> Ideal floats in fancy's sky?
> Ye fond enthusiasts, break the charm;
> And let cool reason clear the mental eye.
> On Britain's well-mix'd state alone,
> True liberty has fix'd her throne,
> Where law, not man, an equal rule maintains:
> Can freedom e'er be found where many a tyrant reigns?
> United, let us all those blessings find,
> The God of Nature meant mankind.
> Whate'er of error, ill represt,
> Whate'er the wicked have conceiv'd,
> And folly's heedless sons believ'd;
> Let all be buried in oblivion's flood,
> And our great cement be, the public good.
>
> (*Quebec Gazette*, Jan. 1, 1778)

The mid-eighteenth century preference for the solidity of reason and opposition to the chaos of emotion still prevailed for this writer and for many of his fellows. For them, reason and order alone could produce the "public good," their central ideal.

His arrogance, of course, destroyed effectiveness, but the writer of the above poem obviously intended his lines to be conciliatory. Few poets bothered, but another did make a comparable effort prior to the War of 1812, although, unfortunately, he invested his verse with a similarly self-righteous tone. He blamed the United States entirely for the approaching conflict while directing his appeal to its citizens for peace and order:

"An Expostulatory Ode to America"

Ah! Why Columbus! why so cross,
So keen, so mad to go to war?
Why risk sure gain for certain loss,
And all thy rising prospects mar?

Britain to thee is close allied,
By many a dear and sacred tie;
Then let not folly, malice, pride,
Urge to unnatural enmity.

She was thy parent - her fond care
Did long thy infancy protect;
Ah! let this prompt thee to forbear
To treat her now with disrespect.

If foul Intrigue, or dark Cabal,
Persuade thee to become her foe,
Pause - and that tender thought recall,
E'er rash resentment strike the blow!

O let not Faction's arts prevail
O'er friendship, prudence, interest, hope;
Weigh well th' event in judgement's scale,
Shoul'st thou in arms with Britain cope!

Where are thy fleets upon the sea,
Her powerful navy to oppose?
Thy commerce soon will fall a prey
To angry, but unwilling foes.

Neutrality has made thee rich -
A Washington, renoun'd, and free;
Let not intriguers thee bewitch,
To hazard thy prosperity.

But if now deaf to Wisdom's voice,
  Friendly remonstrance, feeling's just;
War's dire resolve should be thy choice -
  War's dreadful chance should be thy trust.

Columbia! mark what ills ensure -
  Thy blasted trade will quickly cease -
Thy frantic sons their folly rue,
  And beg once more from Britain peace.
(*Quebec Mercury*, Jan. 25, 1808)

A propos of the worldly focus of Lower Canadian verse, this poem argues for peace most strongly on commercial grounds.

It is interesting to note too that this poem was written some five years before the outbreak of formal hostilities. Combined with the number of other poems written on this subject between 1807 and 1812, it shows that the political consciousness of Lower Canada was quite alert to its contemporary scene and was, consequently, prepared well in advance for the war.

The criticism of American society contained in the two "conciliatory" poems is as unflinching as that offered by any other of the province's poets, but it is couched in milder terms than was normal. Most anti-American poetry of the period indulged in unqualified condemnation. The lines below, for example, denounce the Revolutionary War as an instance of base, treacherous ingratitude, and as decidedly inimical to the public good:

"There was a time" when mild as May -
Old Leo bore *paternal* sway)
Columbia's sons, no way oppress'd,
With wealth and ease were truly bless'd:
For, long in peace, a grateful soil
Bore them each fruit with little toil.
No Tyrants then five tythes destroy'd,
His labour's fruits each swain enjoy'd:
So, plenty ay their boards did crown,

And indigence was quite unknown -
Thus foster'd by a favouring hand
A constant sunshine cheer'd the land,
'Till some (borne high by Fortune's smiles,
And some - by *neighbour's* foredoom'd spoils)
Set loose Sedition's canker'd brood
To undermine - the public good.
Next, rank Rebellion's thick sown seeds
They cause to spring from foreign weeds:
And then, unmasked, with ample strides
Move boldly on where Treason guides. -
(*Quebec Herald*, Feb. 28, 1791)

The War of 1812 was similarly regarded even before it began. The United States was condemned in verse for those negative traits which were understood to be inherent in its socio-political order: treachery, deceit, enslavement, irrationality, and misdirected enthusiasm:

When Nations faith and probity contemn,
And cover misdeeds with cold falsehood's phlegm -
When, with a tyrant leagu'd, the world's sworn foe,
They, at expiring freedom, aim a blow;
When Jeffersonian folly fills the brain,
And bids the phrenzy of Committees reign;
With theoretic rage on ruin rush,
Print lying Proclamations, and not blush;
Arm'd cap-a-pee, strut forth a Bobadil;
Or, on the gun boats and torpedoes, at best,
To stay the thunders of Britannia, rest
(*Quebec Mercury*, Oct. 12, 1807)

America was apparently characterized by social and political chaos, and its "public weal," explicitly described later in the poem, was damned.

A poem cited earlier appealed to the United States to remain neutral and peaceful for economic reasons, but it did not attack as being reprehensible the mercenary character which it ascribed to that nation. The following satire, however, did base its attack on that ground:

Of Traders, often it is said,
Their sole religion is their trade:
Admitting this an axiom true,
The thought we fairly may pursue,
And of the States, without much search,
Conclude that commerce is their church;
Of which pope Madison is head,
Arm'd pontiff-like, with seal of lead,
Instead of squadrons and battalions,
For such are not tatterdemalions.
With this, anathemas he seals,
And 'gainst John Bull his will reveals,
Of late, in one, madly he rants,
And swears unless John soon recants,
And humbly bends to daughter church,
He'll leave the caitiff in the lurch,
Thrust out to beg cotton and bread,
And so live idle and unfed:
And to perdition all consign,
Who take from John his clothes or wine;
Or with him intercourse maintains,
However great the view of gains.
The Anathema, in form, being read,
John a true mastiff born and bred,
To it turns tail, his leg lifts high,
The rest the reader may supply.
(*Quebec Mercury*, Jan. 14, 1811)

The poem's anti-Catholicism, a theme of some prominence in the early poetry of Lower Canada, serves to heighten its anti-Americanism by providing a source of analogy whose application the Americans would generally dislike. Religion again subserves the social focus.

This poem also shows that attacks on the United States often took the form of denunciations of its leaders, usually for their alleged ambitious self-interest, as the comparison of Madison to the Pope attests. Many of the poets of Lower Canada regarded the War of 1812 as Madison's war since he was President at the time, and consequently they directed a good deal of poetic abuse at him. Jefferson too was attacked by the Canadian writers who traced the beginnings of animosities to his

leadership in the years directly preceding Madison's tenure. Both were satirized at some length in a poem entitled "Ode upon Ode; or, A Peep at Washington; or, The Praises of Thomas Jefferson," which was apparently written when Jefferson relinquished the presidency to Madison in 1809, and was then significantly reprinted in the *Montreal Herald* in 1812. It describes Jefferson, as Madison's tutor, advising his protegé in the arts of governing which consist chiefly of keeping the people ignorant, an easy task, as Jefferson says in the following fragment:

> My dearest Madison, we daily find
> A thousand modes to keep the beast purblind;
> A little way he sees, like Owls in light,
> To keep him easier in the rein,
> For dreading hidden paths, on me he'll lean,
> Till much fatigu'd, he sleeps in night:
> What do our honest folks at present, know
> Of state-affairs? - Nought solid, only show.

This criticism of its leaders also applies, in a damning fashion to the entire American political system. The above lines tell the reader implicitly that democracy is wrong-headed because the people do not have the necessary information or wisdom to select the proper leaders. Clever and unscrupulous people are therefore permitted by the system to manipulate and to exploit the people while perpetuating their ignorance.

Benjamin Franklin was also depicted as one of those clever American leaders who was seduced by the lures of personal ambition to misdirect his people:

> Oh! had he been wise to pursue
> The Track for his talents design'd,
> What a tribute of praise had been due,

To the Teacher and Friend of Mankind.
But to covet Political fame
Was in him a degrading ambition,
The spark that from Lucifer came,
And kindled the blaze of sedition.
Let Candour then write on his Urn,
Here lies the renowned inventor
Whose flame to the skies ought to burn,
But inverted, descends to the center.
(*Quebec Mercury*, Sept. 7, 1805)

The poet himself proves clever by wittily turning one of Franklin's inventions against him. The poem's dominant image and central metaphor is a chamber stove which draws the flames of a fire downwards, an appropriate analogy in the writer's view, both for Franklin's spiritual direction and for his introverted self-interest.

The English-Canadian poets' anti-Americanism was intensified during this early period by the ever-present fear that the Americans might be able to entice the French inhabitants to join in the battle against the British. Quebec, after all, was irreversibly French; no progress had yet been made towards the assimilation for which English Canada has always hoped. Some English poets, however, naively expected that the disaffection between the two groups might eventually be eradicated by the French settlers' realization that they were much better off under English than under French rule. They hastened to relay this message to the French colonists, in a peaceful spirit, no doubt, but with an inherent self-righteousness that could not be other than offensive:

Be thankful swains, *Britannia's* conq'ring sword,
Releas'd you from your ancient sov'reign lord,
Beneath whose sway small tyrants held the rod,
Each, in conceit, swell'd to some little god.
Then the poor pittance of the scanty soil,

Hard earn'd, became the prowling tyrant's spoil.
The tawdry lord lawless the lash proud wields,
Lowly his back the peasant patient yields,
Such scenes no more disgrace the yielding soil,
Safe is the product of the peasant's toil -
Protecting laws alike to all extend,
Not less the poor-man's than the rich-man's friend;
Tenant and lord, noble and peasant, all,
Within their influence undistinguish'd fall.
Hence smiling peace and laughing plenty reign,
And gay content, festive delights the plain.
Grateful, ye peasants, own your mended state,
And bless, beneath a GEORGE, your better fate.
(ll. 434-351)[17]

The French-Canadians are told here that in the place of the repressive feudalism of the French rule, they are now to enjoy British freedom, guaranteed by law and a beneficent monarch. It seemed difficult for the English-speaking poet to imagine anyone who would not be immediately satisfied with these conditions.

French-Canadians were not satisfied, however. They did not openly rebel against their new rulers, even when the opportunity to do so arose during the American Revolution. On the other hand, during that conflict they did not spring ardently to the defence of Quebec, and were, consequently, the object of furious denunciation in some English verse of the province:

George to the crisis push'd his fate:
Screen'd by the laws ye *wish'd* to break,
Ye dar'd risk nothing, for your Prince's sake;
Tamely ye *saw* his promis'd succours fail,
And Y****** arm - like Aaron's rod prevail,
Turne to no side Ye ****** of human kind,
Despis'd by both, for public scorn design'd;
Still by your conduct distinguish'd from the rest,
Be *George's* sorrow, and *Canadia's* pest.
(*Quebec Herald*, Jan. 12, 1789)

The French-Canadians were not the only ones criticized for

their conduct during the war. The censoring eye of poetry kept a close watch on the entire provincial society and upbraided those who it deemed were acting frivolously in a period of crisis:

> When War's alarms spread terrors far and wide,
> And every Loyal Soul should be in arms;
> When Gallic breasts beat high with boastive pride,
> And Spaniards threaten us with hostile harms:
>
> Shall rosin'd lightning gleam throughout our rooms,
> Shall magic lanthorns, or shall puppets please?
> Shall artificial Thunder shake our Domes,
> Or sing-song nonsense give a moment's ease?
>
> Weak is the mind thus pleas'd with silly toys,
> The Man of sense would spurn them from his thought,
> Would quit puerilities to Girls and Boys,
> And do his duty as his station taught.
> (*Quebec Gazette*, Apr. 4, 1782)

The writers of the two preceding admonitory poems envisioned military service as a means of preserving an identity for Canadian colonists, albeit they conceived that identity to be inseparable from the grander British name. A similar stance was adopted by poets who gloried in Canadian accomplishments during the War of 1812, with the important distinction that they now began to use the title "Canadian" rather than labelling everyone simply as Britons, as had previously been the practice. The provincial identity, although still of course subservient to the imperial, was now strong enough to bear labelling, as, for example, in "The Canadian Patriot's Hymn":

> Whilst still fierce war's red torrents flow,
> And tinge with blood our fertile plains,
> With Joy Canadian hearts must flow,
> That still undaunted are our swains.
> Our sires behold, with noble pride,
> Their sons acquiring wreaths of Glory;
> Heroes in victory's arms who died,
> But who shall live, shall live in story;

Canadians e'er your hymn shall be,
Our native Land, our King, and Liberty.
And long may each Canadian feel,
In freedom's cause his heart beat high;
For Home, and for our Sovereign's weal,
In Glory's crimson field to die:
And, sure some maid will shed the tear,
Some much lov'd Fair with sorrow bending
O'er her lamented Warrior's bier,
Who died herself and King defending;
Yes, Warrior, Yes, our Hymn shall be,
For England's King, dear love and Liberty.
(*Montreal Herald*, Oct. 15, 1814)

Another small step towards the establishment of a Canadian identity was taken here.

Martial deeds did contribute to the development of a sense of Canada, but, ironically, such a sense already existed for some colonial writers as early as 1787 and was grounded not in war but in peace. Canada was distinguished from other countries as a singularly peaceful land:

Thrice happy land! to which indulgent heav'n,
The bliss that others vainly boast has giv'n;
What tho' no generous sun with fervid rays
Bid metals ripen and the diamond blaze,
Pomarra's various gifts thou can'st not boast,
And commerce half the year forsakes thy coast;
While winter's glooms involve thy dreary plains,
And bind thy streams in adamantine chains,
For thee the chains of peace, and freedom, join,

... while surrounding states with anxious care,
Felt the dire ravage of destructive war,
Here halcyon peace a calm retirement chose,
Amidst a world oppress'd with fears, and woes;
Thus where St. Lawrence rolls his rapid wave,
A scanty isle dares ev'ry effort brave;
In conscious strength it stands, and beauty crown'd
While foaming surges vainly bellow round.
Behold it swell to more distinguish'd fame,
I see the glorious arts commence their reign,
And equity unbias'd, rule maintain;

To charity and justice, domes arise,
In smiling grandeur to the approving skies
(*Quebec Gazette*, Jan. 11, 1787, and
Montreal Gazette, Jan. 11, 1787)

Peace not only provided this writer with a sense of Canada's distinctiveness, but it also prompted him to predict a glorious Canadian future in what is one of the more intense, early expressions of incipient Canadian nationalism.

The poets of Lower Canada were sufficiently impressed by the relatively peaceful record of their colony, particularly in the years of the Napoleonic Wars, to remark frequently upon this characteristic as Canada's unique advantage. Correlative to this, they produced a number of poems celebrating peace in general and attacking war. It is quite probable, although no one ever said so specifically, that these pro-peace, anti-war sentiments were partially impelled by the colonists' realization of their own vulnerability to the immediate and ultimate effects of war. Their garrison position, as we have said, made them constantly aware of these realities.

The fact that their lives were so conditioned by military matters may explain why the writers of Lower Canada were able to evaluate the character of war so realistically. Some of them saw war as ultimately futile and, in its immediate effects, foolishly wasteful:

....specious conquests of wild-wasting war.
Destructive war! at best the good of few,
Its dire effects whilst millions rue.
(*Abram's Plains*, ll. 51-53)

Europe of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries was constantly torn by martial strife and so it is not surprising that comparisons of Canada and Europe, advantageous to the former, should

be made in some provincial verse. Cornwall Bayley, for example, described Canada as an idyllically independent society, free from religious bigotry and oppression, from political persecution, and from economic and sexual exploitation, all of which presumably were traits of European society:

> For in *these* cots afar from Atheist pride,
> And bigot doctrines to deceit allied;
> Faith, Hope and Charity adore the cross,
> Of *him* who suffer'd to redeem our loss -
> Religion here disdains not to impart,
> Her warmest influence on the simple heart;
> Here persecution tempts not from his door,
> To seek a gentler rule the pious poor;
> No griping landlord with oppression's rod,
> Drives the poor tenant from his sweet abode;
> No wretch with one monopolizing hand
> Spreads crafty famine o'er a plenteous land;
> No titled Lord th' instructed child of vice,
> Whose laws are passion, and whose Gods are dice,
> Lays siege to virgin innocence and Youth,
> Ensnares her prudence - tramples on her truth;
> Then spurns her, glorying in his brutal fame,
> A prey to guilty tears - to poverty - and shame! -
>
> It is not so - for here the rustic bands,
> Themselves enjoy the labour of their hands;
> Each views the independence of his lot,
> The genial stove that cheers his cleanly cot;
> His faithful wife - his offspring's varying stage,
> In quick succession rip'ning into age;
> His neat Calash (himself the artist) made,
> For use and pleasure - not for vain parade;
> The well plough'd arpent - the laborious steed,
> Tho' small, yet strong, and certain in his speed;
> The cow's full udder wishing to be press'd,
> The downy flock whence flows his self-made vest;
> The river's freedom or the babbling brook
> Where many a victim trembles on his hook,
> These are his riches; - but from Heaven sent,
> He boasts his greatest wealth in virtue and content![18]

Bayley appears to have given a large place to religion in his vision of life, but the greater portion of his attention was really occupied

by social concerns. The spiritual realm was invoked to complete, rather than to subjugate, the worldly.

Canada's natural environment, in addition to her social, was also a source of flattering comparison of the new world with the old. The most extravagant of such comparisons was J. Mackay's assertion that nature in Canada is unsurpassed even by that which Virgil described:

> The lawns of Virgil, and his silvan shade,
> Tho' in the poet's choicest colours clad,
> Should here confess description more sublime[19]

His estimation seems to apply solely to the visual aspect of nature, however, for he went on in his poem to point out that Canada's physical environment has other attributes which are not at all attractive, such as raging storms, fierce animals, savage Indians, and a winter whose cold can be easily fatal. Raw, uncivilized nature was not to his liking. He closed the poem by stating that he preferred above all the physical environment of England.

Mackay's retreat was not unique: a number of his fellow verse writers from Lower Canada also expressed a preference for nature tamed and made suitable for society. They varied, though, in their appraisal of when this civilizing process was accomplished. The most chauvinistic naturally held that it did not happen until the British came:

> Nature astonish'd feels the pleasing theme,
> Where Lawrence pours his wide Majestic stream;
> Astonish'd sees Quebec's once-distant wilds,
> Crown'd with Devotion and with peaceful smiles!
> Is this the spot where o'er the piling fire
> The Indian's watch'd their victim foes expire?
> Is this the spot where, hastening from afar,

With brethren clans they wag'd eternal war?
Is this the spot, where slavery's despot chain
Frown'd midst the night of superstition's reign?
How chang'd the scene! - now nought but mutual love;
Descends from seraph features from above.
(*Quebec Gazette*, Dec. 26, 1805)

Others merely claimed the achievement for Europe, for both groups were agreed that nature suitable for Indian society was not at all civilized nature. Nature at its best was nature exploited for the benefit of man, particularly for his material benefit. The Indian did not employ nature in this fashion; it was believed therefore that the land only wasted under his occupation.

This belief, combined with the opinion expressed in the above excerpt that the Indian was only an unruly savage, provided self-justification for the white man's mistreatment of the native peoples. But not all of Lower Canada's early versifiers accepted this rationale, or the description of Indian society upon which it was based. A few credited the Indian with possessing a very positive society characterized by the virtues of freedom and internal peace:

Where nature, undebauch'd; with freedom reigns:
Where liberty's pure air the native draws,
Unknowing creeds, or polity, or laws:
Yet ev'ry sweet, he tastes, of social life,
Nor needs defence 'gainst theft, or rape, or knife.
If enmity he feels, 'tis 'gainst his foes,
Whilst, for his neighbour's weal, his bosom glows.
(*Quebec Gazette*, Mar. 16, 178[illegible])

At the same time, criticism was obviously levelled against white society, as in the lines just quoted, for its numerous social evils and its "debauching" of nature.

White society was also indicted by a few early poets in Lower

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Canada for its treatment of the native populations. These had been so ravaged already that elegies for their passing were even now being composed. Before 1815, depictions of the Indian's march toward oblivion tended to focus upon its sordid and less romantic aspects. The writer of the following poem, for instance, drew a rather bleak picture of what the Indian had already become by the opening of the nineteenth century:

The silent moon, the stars, the skies,
  Eve's sober gray, the morning light,
The mid-day blaze, in savage eyes,
  Nor wonder nor regard excite:

Enough for him, in ign'rance bred,
  Night yields to morn, and sun to rain;
That Nature's pulse, in winter dead,
  By spring rekindled, throbs again:

. . .

For treachery oft in ambush lurks,
  To rob his scant and wretched store,
And vengeance, bent on murderous works,
  Embraces her hand in kindred gore;

No blooming bride, in warm delight,
  Awaits his ravish'd sense to steep;
Nor fancy cheats the tedious night,
  Nor golden visions charm in sleep;

. . .

To toil, and stripes, and misery bred,
  The *female* droops beneath her doom;
Hoar frosts, untimely, strew her head,
  And wrinkles mark her withered bloom;

For the bright smile of Albion's fair,
  Her cheeks untimely labors plough;
For polish'd limbs and auburn hair,
  The toil-worn arm, and hollow brow:

Her's the dead eye, that fix'd awhile
  Glares, the dull mirror of the mind,
Or brightens to an idiot smile,
  For loathing more than love design'd.

(*Quebec Mercury*, July 6, 1807)

In this passage there is only a hint of the sentimentality which increasingly characterizes depictions of the Indian after 1815.

The realistic outlook with its focus upon man in society, which informed the above poem, also enabled the early verse writers to produce a fairly detailed picture of the more mundane aspects of their province's social life. They told, for example, of their entertainment. Two poems in the *Quebec Gazette* for July 5, 1764, reveal that horse racing was a popular pastime in the colony, not a surprising revelation about a society comprised largely of military personnel. They also record that people had been bringing their dogs to these events and permitting them to roam about unrestricted, with the unfortunate result that a horse was killed (a note accompanying the poems warned that any dogs present at these races in the future would themselves be killed).

The theatre was another early source of entertainment in Quebec, as it was in the Maritimes. A poem in the *Quebec Gazette* for March 6, 1783, hailed the recent opening of a theatre in that city. There was no controversy in this province concerning the moral good or harm of a theatre. Poetry here proclaimed only the benefits of dramatic presentation. In one poem these benefits were declared to be didactically moral:

> The stage, great mirrour of the human mind!
> Reflects with truth the features of mankind:
> Here their strong *traits*, may see the knave and fool,
> Here virtue, chief erects her moral school.
> To her blest sane, to point the certain way,
> To shew the wand'rer when he goes astray,
> With great, with gen'rous thoughts t'expand the mind,
> T'inforce benevolence to all mankind,
> To amuse, inform, to elevate the soul,

The base, the sordid passions to controul,
To instruct the head, to mend the vicious heart,
To form the manners - this the Drama's part.
(*Quebec Gazette*, Mar. 6, 1783)

Other poets seem to have felt no need to justify the stage's presence with moral arguments. That it relieved care, entertained, and perhaps contributed to social refinement, was to them sufficient justification for its existence:

[Drama can]
Amuse the fancy, and the mind relieve
From the still languor of a winter's eve
(*Quebec Herald*, Feb. 1, 1790)

To soften care, mend, and refine the age,
Are the great ends of a well-order'd stage.
(*Quebec Mercury*, Jan. 5, 1805)

There is also the possibility that the stage was more important to the history of early Lower Canada verse than its function as subject matter for that verse would indicate. Much of the drama performed for the colonial audiences was verse drama. Consequently, verse was a more familiar medium to the colonials than their reading habits would suggest. In addition, verse prologues were frequently recited before dramatic performances, and as these tended to be produced in the locale of the performance itself rather than by the playwright, this custom served to stimulate native versifying. Added to this, of course, was the natural human impulse of imitation.

Ordinary, diurnal pastimes also found their way into the verse annals of colonial life, often with satirical import. The following poem purports to provide an accurate delineation of the pursuits of Canadians in winter, but it is also a sharp attack upon sloth and frivolity:

The Villagers resign'd to slothful ease,
  Now dose in fumes the tedious hours away;
For who no cause for emulation sees,
  Will no great Pow'rs of Industry display:
Nor Art, nor Science, here informs the mind,
'Tis superstition's task its Votaries to blind.

Not to the cottager alone,
The *Muse* her Censure dares make known,
The Town, a far more ample field,
Gives Satire room her pen to wield:
For here, six dreamy Moons, bleak Winter reigns,
And bids the Sons of Commerce cease their Pains:
And yet fair Science, with her Sister *Art*,
Neglected mourn, their strange deserted part.
    Whilst *Folly* with her daughter *Fashion*,
        In their motley Robes array'd,
    Claim a gen'ral adoration,
        To them all our Vows are paid.

Sees *Fashion* with her offsprings all,
Concert, *Masquerade* and *Ball*.
But last, and greatest in her Train,
Is *Conversationi* vain.
See in his right hand favor'd *Hoyle*,
To gain the Odd-trick, all his toil;
The left, *Spadille* and *Pam* displays,
For *Point*, *Quatorse* and *Quint* he prays.
Hark! Mortals hark, she calls, away - away -
On - follow - follow - *Fashion* leads the Way.

See, in her train, the Mother and the Wife,
  Misled by Phantoms of the thoughtless gay:
Nor by her own good Sense dares rules her Life,
  Borne by the Current, spite of thought away.
Domestic rule, with high Contempt she spurns,
Whilst all her Soul for Cards and Visits burns.
(*Quebec Gazette*, Dec. 5, 1782)

The writer conceded that the severity and the length of the Canadian winter closed off the normal avenues of commerce, but he maintained that society could occupy its time more usefully than with cards and concerts. Social utility rather than moral utility was his standard of conduct, but he was prepared to apply it as rigidly as any religious moralist would apply his code.

Woman was particularly singled out for uncomplimentary treatment in this last poem. She was criticized for forsaking her matrimonial and maternal duties to pursue inconstant and ephemeral fashions, a charge which was levelled against her sex more than once in the early verse of Lower Canada. Frequently, when fashion signified attire, the above charge was combined with a castigation of feminine immodesty, as in the following humorous lines:

> As Jack above a draper's shop,
> Saw written Bombazeen:
> I prithee Sal I'll beg you stop,
> And tell what that may mean.
>
> It means fair Ladies dress, she cried,
> Who now go naked nearly;
> And such is now their wanton pride,
> 'Tis *Bum be seen* most clearly.
> (*Quebec Mercury*, May 22, 1809)

These criticisms were not restricted to any one particular part of the period now under consideration. The following advice was printed in the *Quebec Herald* on April 15, 1790:

> Girls, who intend the heart to seize,
> Must show their beauties by degrees:
> By full display they lose their aim,
> 'Tis expectation feeds the flame,
> And gently fans the am'rous fire,
> Which but for that would soon expire,
> The *breast* which pants through *Cyprus gauze*,
> A glance of admonition draws;
> But when we have seen it o'er and o'er,
> It strikes us with surprize no more;
> We coply own its *sunny charms*,
> But feel no violent alarms;
> We soon grow surfeited with those,
> Who all their charms at once disclose

If the verse itself is an accurate barometer, the women of Quebec were prone to display a generous portion of their physical charms, a style

which perhaps reflected the mores of the military and frontier society in which they were living. At any rate, most writers of the time did not attempt to counter this propensity by moral lecturing. Instead, as the writers above have done, they subjected feminine conduct to the purgative of satire or appealed to a sense of practical efficacy.

These and many other poems of a related nature indicate that the feminine sex was a popular topic for early Lower Canadian versifiers to a much greater extent than it had been for their contemporaries in the Maritimes. But in most of this verse woman was treated as a comic figure, even in those poems which pretended to have been composed by women. A poem entitled "The Maid's Petition," was allegedly penned by a lady who descended to public solicitation on behalf of herself and her fellow virgins in an attempt to counter the formidable competition of the province's "widows" (prostitutes) for the affections of the eligible young men. The plight is comically described as desperate: woman by nature is not a complete being without male companionship and guidance:

> A virgin was design'd by Nature,
> A weakly and imperfect Creature,
> So apt to fall, so apt to stray,
> Her Wants require a Guide, a Stay.
> And then so timorous of Sprites,
> She dares not lie alone at Nights;
> Say what she will, do what she can,
> Her heart still gravitates to Man.
> (*Quebec Gazette*, Apr. 9, 1767)

Those holding such views on woman could also be expected to maintain equally disparaging views of marriage, and there were indeed

several poems expressing a humorously mocking attitude toward that institution. But there were others who held a more positive outlook and who proclaimed matrimony to be the epitome of social joy and true life; as well as to be a product of refined affections:

For life, true life, is only found
In social joys, and social tears.

Let moping monks, and rambling rakes,
The joys of wedded love deride:
Their manners rise from gross mistakes,
Unbridled lust, or gloomy pride.

Thy sacred sweets connubial love.
Flow from affections more refin'd;
Affections sacred to the dove,
Heroic, constant, warm and kind.

Hail, holy flame, hail, sacred tye!
That winds two gentle souls in one!
On equal wings their troubles fly,
In equal streams their pleasures run.

Their duties still their pleasures bring;
Hence joys in swift succession come
(*Quebec Gazette*, Nov. 16, 1780)

By this reasoning, bachelorhood is clearly bereft of the finer pleasures and sentiments, and is, furthermore, a state potentially, and actually, harmful both to the individual and to society:

The dry, dull, drowsy *Bachelor* surveys
Alternate joyless Nights and lonesome Days;
No tender Transports wake his sullen Breast,
No soft Endearments lull his Cares to rest:
Stupidly free from Nature's tend'rest Ties,
Lost in his own *sad self* he lives and dies.

Not so the Man to whom indulgent Heaven,
That tender Bosom-Friend, a WIFE, has given:
Him blest in her kind Arms no Fears dismay,
No secret Checks of Guilt his joys allay;
No Husband wrong'd, no virgin's Honor spoil'd,
No tender Parent weeps his ruin'd Child,
No bad disease or false Embrace is here,
The *Joys* are safe, the *Raptures* are sincere.
(*Quebec Gazette*, Mar. 16, 1767)

A number of the poems written on the subjects of love and matrimony purported to be written by women, and a few undoubtedly were, but the outlook propounded by Lower Canadian verse as a whole was decidedly masculine. This is especially true of the poetry which slighted the matrimonial state. There were poems complaining of overbearing and unfaithful wives, but there were little or no parallel expressions of dissatisfaction with bullying, drunken, or unfaithful husbands.

Feminine infidelity and sexual promiscuity were not always severely censured, however. Some of the casualness and humour which characteristically invested depictions of masculine sexuality often extended to the feminine as well. A tale such as that of Alcmena's seduction by Jove was retold with mild amusement rather than with disapproval of the lady's sly infidelity:

> Fir'd by *Alcmena's* youthful charms,
> To win her to his longing arms,
> His various arts in vain he ply'd,
> At length her husband's form he try'd.
> Her *husband's?* - start not, gentle dame,
> 'Twas then not such an odious name:
> Husbands (few ages then had past)
> *Were* sometimes fond; *Wives* sometimes chaste!
> But whether by his shape deceiv'd,
> Th' incautious fair his tale believ'd,
> Or whether she in private knew
> The false *Amphytrion* from the true,
> And - as I rather apprehend,
> Wink'd at the change, and took his friend, -
> Suffice it - all in order went,
> That *Jove* was pleas'd! and she content!
> (*Quebec Gazette*, Dec. 17, 1778).

Some of the above passages reveal that the sexual dimensions of human life were certainly not neglected amidst the Lower Canadian

poet's "realistic" concerns. He was even capable of employing sexual *double entendre* of a blatant nature in his verse. The following lines, for example, which pretend to have been uttered by an Irishman to an overly critical English gentlewoman, allude quite distinctly to the act of sexual intercourse:

> When ladies precise will affect the stale Prude;
> Call this Thing too coarse, and the other too rude,
> 'Tis Time we should tell them their own;
> Our Girls are much prettier, freer from Pride,
> Though their legs are the thickest, we lay them aside
> Nor care for your Smile, or your Frown.
> While your poor English Lovers court, flatter, and swear,
> Now sigh in a Sonnet, now whine in Despair,
> With Spirit we open the Trenches;
> Though so haughty before, your high-bred English Dame
> Is soon found unable to smother her Flame,
> And we win the Ground fairly by Inches.
> (*Quebec Gazette*, Mar. 2, 1767)

Here the barracks speaks out quite clearly, and devastatingly, despite the poem's humour.

Criticism in the poetry of Lower Canada was not always couched in humorous terms, of course, and neither was it always aimed at individuals or at a particular sex. Institutions were also attacked, and in a province with the unique population profile of Quebec, it is scarcely surprising to note that the institution attacked most prominently in the English verse of the day was the Roman Catholic Church. The primarily Protestant, English-speaking population was naturally antagonistic toward the pronounced presence in their new territory of this long-despised enemy. Their verse expressed this antagonism, but not in theological terms. Instead, they attacked the Church for what they envisioned as the deleterious social consequences of its teachings and customs. They

accused it of deliberately promulgating the ignorance and superstition of its members for the purposes of power and economic exploitation. J. Mackay asserted that in Quebec "neglected droops the human mind, / Or, bred in terror, scrupulously blind" (*Quebec Hill*, ll. 155-156), and indicated the Roman Church as the villain:

> . . . here blind Superstition holds his sway;
> And artful Priestcraft leads the mind astray.
> Nigh yonder hill, where various verdure grows,
> The village spire its soaring stature shows;
> The dome beneath for worship is assign'd,
> And thence, untaught, returns the weary hind.
> As humid vapours cloud the face of day,
> And lead the wand'ring traveller astray,
> So papal mists obscure the peasant's mind,
> And to the clearest precepts keep him blind.
> (*Quebec Hill*, ll. 249-258)

Thomas Cary called the Church "Great less'ner of the little of the poor" (*Abram's Plains*, l. 365), and also accused it of ruling by means of superstition. Cornwall Bayley more specifically lamented the waste of human, particularly female, life that occurred in the unnatural, anti-social sterility of religious cloisters:

> One tear be shed, as the deep-sounding bell
> Religion's victims summons to her all;
> One tear to find that superstition's reign,
> Ev'n here her gloomy influence can retain;
> That beauty, beauteous in a female mind,
> For active virtue, and for love design'd;
> Should linger here by false delusion led,
> Lost to the world - to life's enjoyments dead!
> (*Co[illegible]da*, ll. 489-496)

Other than this spate of anti-Catholicism, there was very little expression of religious sectarianism in early Lower Canadian poetry; nor did the poets of Quebec compensate for this dearth with much expression of latitudinarianism. Thomas Cary made the only significant

specific statement of it when he asserted that man's religious professions are determined by early training and habit rather than by rational choice or distinguished merit. He logically concluded, therefore, that religious affiliation could not be regarded as a determinant of individual damnation or salvation:

> Habit forms all, taste, gesture, action, thought,
> The man ripe rises as the stripling's taught;
> Ductile as soften'd wax the human soul,
> Twig-like, insensibly stoops to controul:
> By rules, but more by great example, led,
> He rises Jew, Turk, Christian, as he's bred.
> Since then, we own, man is but moulded clay,
> Life's journey let each travel his own way.
> And since heaven's roofs beyond all limits rise,
> And a free passage opens through the skies;
> Why not suppose there's ample room for all,
> Be life resign'd with or without a call?
> (*Abram's Plains*, ll. 184-195)

Lower Canada's versifiers on the whole did not seem to be much interested in the topic of religion. They said almost nothing in its praise. The following lines almost grudgingly concede a positive function for religion: that it can bring consolation in this world, but only in an indirect fashion, through the promise of bliss after death:

> He whose humane gen'rous breast
> Suffers from the soul distrest;
> He, whose meek and happy mind
> Is to the will of heav'n resign'd;
> Who from his justly earned store,
> With pitying heart, relieves the poor;
> He, who with temp'rance receives
> The blessings bounteous nature gives;
> Eternal joys shall crown his trouble,
> And prove his life was not a bubble.
> (*Quebec Herald*, Jan. 19, 1789)

A *contemptus mundi* outlook underlies the above sentiment, an

outlook which the pioneer poets of Lower Canada frequently expressed without any concomitant religious resolution. They were not motivated to ignore religion because they were unimpressed with the inevitable hardships of a colonial existence. It is just as likely that they were confirmed in ignoring religion because they were very much impressed by these hardships, and could find little consolation for them in religion. Certainly, when they did regard the present world closely, life was seen as a bubble indeed:

> How unstable, and fleet are our joys!
> What is there in life, worth its pain!
> The bubble's a bubble of toys
> (*Quebec Gazette*, May 27, 1784)

Life's most positive attributes were declared ephemeral:

> ... grandeur, wealth and youth,
> Like bubbles on life's surface play,
> And wheel and dance upon the shore,
> But burst, and die away,
> To rise upon the tide no more.
> (*Montreal Gazette*, Sept. 12, 1808)

Maritime poetry also possessed a *contemptus mundi* vision of life, as we have seen, but it was usually expressed in conjunction with a more positive vision of an eternal life, a vision which consequently rendered death itself a positive force. One of the poems quoted above (at the bottom of p.) reveals that this attitude was maintained by at least one Lower Canadian verse writer. The characteristic attitude of the region, however, was to see death as a release from life's hardships *without* expecting it to bring eternal happiness in heaven. Most writers were content to regard life merely as a cessation of mundane ills, as peace:

"The Tombs"

Ah! how peaceful are we
From existence set free!
In these cells, we nor toils nor adversities fear,
Soft Asylum of woe,
No sorrows we know,
But the rest and composure of Heaven are here.

Here in slumbers repose,
Alike friends, and their foes,
The mighty are plac'd on a level with clowns:
Vain grandeur and pride,
Are laid careless aside;
Even monarchs forget the distinction of crowns.

Ever merciful tomb!
Ever pitiless womb!
This opens, that closes a prospect of strife;
Our day is gone past,
We are happy at last,
Disincumber'd of all the vain frailties of life.

(*Montreal Gazette*, Sept. 26, 1808)

It should be obvious by this point of our discussion that religion was a very minor force in the early poetry of Lower Canada. Further proof of this may be seen in the treatment of nature in this verse. The poets of Lower Canada did not employ nature as an emblem of moral or spiritual truth as frequently as did the poets of the Maritimes. The former did use nature primarily as a poetic device rather than as a focus of poetic vision, but they assigned its emblematic value chiefly to the human sphere. Mount Royal, for example, is described in the following sonnet as an emblem of life's change and decay:

Thou fading Mount, whose variegated brow
The rage of rude autumnal blasts betrays,
How justly emblematical art thou
Of life's dire changes, and its sad decays!
When on the pensive visage time, pourtrays
His stealing langour; and the sik'ning heart
Dead to the smiles of joy, and charms of art,
To blooming hope, and pleasures soft controul

No more with sweet delusion can impart
A gleam of comfort to the cheerless soul:
Still holds th' allusion? when thy honours bow
Beneath the early storms despoiling rage,
And sad affection, life consuming woe,
Forestall the influence of declining age.
(*Montreal Gazette*, Dec. 14, 1786)

The river and falls of Montmorency were depicted by another early writer as emblematic of the progress of human life:

Thy stream fair river emblematick shows,
The short the devious life of earth born man.
Thou at thy source art but a scanty rill
Babbling with tinkling sounds adown the vale,
Like prattling childhood in its early dawn.
Soon by degrees you grow a fuller stream,
Rambling in many a maze, the fields among.
O! Emblem but too just; of thoughtless man;
While in youth's giddy Labyrinth he strays.
Now in a full serene and placid course,
Thou gently pour'st, thy copious flood along;
Like man arriv'd at his sedater years;
Whose passions rule not, but still move enough
To keep free circulation in the soul.
Lock'd up a while, within thy rocky mound;
In dimpling Eddies, scarce you seem to move;
Like Age that balances upon the brink,
'Twixt life and death; till forc'd by time away,
Impetuous rushing o'er these horrid rocks,
Whose pointed cliffs, thy foaming waters dash,
Thundering full many a fathom headlong down,
Thou'rt lost in the dread black Abyss below.
Thence ne'er to visit more thy sunny banks,
And flow'ry windings of thy former course
(*Quebec Gazette*, July 3, 1777)

The further step required to transform the analogy of nature and human life into a statement of religious affirmation is absent in both of the above poems. It was significantly absent too in poetry which dealt with the cyclical aspect of nature. One lengthy poem does compare the various stages of human life to the progression of the seasons, but instead of pursuing this analogy to affirm a conventional

Christian vision of resurrection and life everlasting, it concludes with the bleak realization that the natural cycle does not apply *in toto* to man:

> But not to us the renovating Spring
> Our former Health and Vigour can restore, -
> In vain the SEASONS all the Blessings bring,
> We never, never can enjoy them more.
> (*Quebec Gazette*, Jan. 9, 1777)

Once again, there has been no recourse to religious consolation.

Early Lower Canadian versifiers did use nature in their works in other than emblematic ways, but, characteristically, they still rendered it subservient to man. Both Cary, in *Abram's Plains*, and Mackay, in *Quebec Hill*, employed descriptions of the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River water system as the structural thread uniting their respective commentaries internally, and as the locale for the human story of conquest which is the primary concern of both poems.

The most consistent feature of English verse written in Lower Canada between 1760 and 1815 is its fundamental focus upon man as a social rather than as a spiritual being. As has been suggested, this characteristic, which so clearly distinguishes this verse from that written in the Maritimes during the same period, must surely be attributed to the garrison existence which political and demographic exigencies forced upon Quebec's English colony at that time.

CHAPTER IV

LOWER CANADA 1815-1830

After 1815, the character of Lower Canadian verse changed. The central focus upon man as a social being was retained, but the manner of presentation of that focus was significantly, albeit not radically, altered. The marked increase in the variety of verse forms employed by colonial poets after 1815 most clearly signalled this alteration. The formerly ubiquitous couplet did not disappear, but it did diminish in use while stanzaic arrangements of various kinds became more popular. Similarly, the pentameter line gave way to trimeters, tetrameters, and lengthy lines, while the iamb was frequently replaced by or interspersed with dactyls, trochees, spondees, and anapests. Verse in general had become more flexible and more fluid.

This change in the physical manner of expression was accompanied by a less obvious but more significant change in the attitude with which the writers regarded their materials. They now presented their topics with more emotion. They romanticized their subjects more than in the past, although that romanticization was of an eighteenth century cast purveying sweet sentimentality rather than Wordsworthian rapture. This romanticization, one must caution, was not a predominant characteristic of the verse of this period (it became dominant after 1830), but it was

sufficiently pronounced to effect a change in the general character of the verse between 1815 and 1830.

These changes in the character of Lower Canadian verse were produced by simultaneous changes in the social and political environment of the province. The biggest single factor in this respect was the termination finally of the Napoleonic conflicts. The decrease in danger for Britain was of course a decrease also for her overseas possessions, and permitted the latter to attend less assiduously to immediate realities than they had been forced to do in the past. This new luxury of relative security was also prompted and confirmed by the recent victory which the colonies had enjoyed over the United States in the War of 1812 to 1814.

This new-found security, while in no sense absolute, nevertheless diminished for Lower Canada the importance of its military garrison. At the same time, increased British immigration into the province, occasioned by the cessation of hostilities in Europe, decreased the percentage of the English-speaking population directly associated with the military. The English in the province remained to some extent in a garrison-like position as the flow of immigration carried most of the settlers either to the Maritimes or on into Upper Canada. As a consequence, the English of Quebec were still vastly out-numbered by the French, but the latter's behaviour in the recent campaigns against the American invasions, in which a couple of French-Canadian regiments had distinguished themselves, was some consolation to the ruling minority. Some disturbances did occur prior to 1830, and the provincial British did

worry constantly about their political supremacy, but these problems did not seem to offer serious military threats. Quebec's English too could take some comfort from the propinquity of a steadily increasing community of English settlers in Upper Canada.

The Upper Canadian community was also important to that of Lower Canada, and especially to that of Montreal, because it provided for that city an economic and cultural hinterland. Upper Canadian support was of considerable consequence to the English press in Quebec, and was undoubtedly a contributing factor to Montreal's boom of periodical publication in the 1820's, which in turn stimulated the production of native poetry in both areas. Adam Hood Burwell,[1] for example, was one Upper Canadian verse writer to publish several efforts in the Montreal presses. Three magazines of note appeared in Montreal during the 1820's. The most successful, at least in terms of longevity, was Samuel Hull Wilcocke's *Scribbler*[2] which, owing to official displeasure and harassment, was printed in the United States. In spite of its problems, and also partially because of them, the *Scribbler* managed to survive shakily from 1821 to 1827. The other two magazines were less fortunate. The *Canadian Magazine and Literary Repository* ran from 1823 to 1825, and the *Canadian Review and Literary and Historical Journal* ran from 1824 to 1826.

The metropolitan-hinterland relationship of the two Canadian provinces contributed also, no doubt, to the increased publication of books of native poetry in Quebec, especially in the 1820's. In the opening year of that decade, an anonymous work entitled *Hours of*

Childhood and Other Poems was published in Montreal by Ariel Bowman who was also apparently its author.[3] Bowman was an American emigré, and so the designation of his poetry as native to Lower Canada is as dubious as a similar claim would be for the work of Mrs. Margaret Blennerhassett,[4] published under the title *The Widow of the Rock and Other Poems* by E. V. Sparhawk in Montreal in 1824. Before the decade was out, however, a number of authentic Canadian volumes had been published. Most prolific of the authors was Levi Adams[5] with three separate works: *The Charivari; or, Canadian Poetics* (Montreal, 1824), *Jean Baptiste; A Poetic Olio* (Montreal, 1825), and *Tales of Chivalry and Romance* (Edinburgh, 1826).[6] These were followed by Robert Sweeny's[7] *Odds and Ends* (New York, 1826), William Fitz Hawley's[8] *Quebec, The Harp, and Other Poems* (Montreal, 1829) and Adam Kidd's[9] *The Huron Chief, and Other Poems* (Montreal, 1830). In addition, an anonymous pamphlet poem entitled *Pro and Con, A Satirico-Political Dialogue* was issued at Quebec City in 1828.

The Bowman-Blennerhassett group comprises the most telling American presence in the verse of Lower Canada prior to 1830, but its impact was far outweighed by Gaelic influences. Poems in the Scottish dialect continued to be popular (and would be for some time), and in the 1820's the Irish began to make their presence known through such writers as Robert Sweeny and Adam Kidd, as well as through the number of poems devoted to Ireland.

From the above it is clear that Lower Canadian verse was being affected significantly by immigration even though the numbers of immigrants to that province remained relatively small. Many of the new

writers, especially those who can now be identified by name, were recent immigrants, and they were certainly instrumental in promoting the strain of sentimentality which began to distinguish the verse of Lower Canada at this time.

Romantic sentimentality was not adopted wholesale by provincial versifiers. Some maintained wholly unromantic stances, while Levi Adams directed a satirical attack against conventional romantic sentimentality in the opening stanzas of *Jean Baptiste:*

II

. . . some would write to keep the world in wonder;
No matter what the subject of their theme,
Whether it be the splitting word asunder,
Digesting sentences, - or fancy's dream,
Of bright eyes - set with lashes o'er and under,
Of brown or black; which scarce indeed doth seem,
Worth writing verse about, tho' poets do so -
And seem as fond of trifles, as an old virtu'so.

III

Or yet of auburn hair, in copious tresses,
Which adds such beauty to the dimpled cheek;
Or crimson blush - that something odd expresses,
Which truant lips would fain - but dare not speak,-
Or Ladies' 'kerchiefs, zones, or satin dresses,-
Item cum multis - which would take a week
To specify - in this stiff, wayward rhyme;
And at the best -. 'twould be but mock sublime.

IV

Some woo and supplicate the "tuneful nine,"
As if they were young misses in their teens;-
Some bow submissive at their "sacred shrine,"
And call them "Goddesses" and "heav'nly queens:"
Some choose out *one*, and her great name combine,
With that of "mistress," whom he "humbly weens,"
Will deign to aid him in his bold endeavour,
To prove himself a genius "mighty clever."

V

Another blubbers out - "aid me kind muses,
To keep upright, astride the old jaded back,
Of Mount Parnassus" - or perchance chooses,
Some "gnome" or "sprite" to guide him in the track,
To fame's proud pinnacle - and thus abuses
Their highness - coupling them in a pack - -
Or by nick-named - at which the wise will scowl,
Pull a long face - and look much like an owl.[10]

Adams' poem is admittedly imitative, but it is not vapidly conventional, nor does the humour of its statement in any way diminish the validity of its satire. On the contrary, the Byronic *ottava rima* with its arsenal of forced and feminine rhymes, thinly disguised enjambment, and persistent caesurae conveys a comic colloquial tone and rhythm which reduces by comparison the superficial sentiment and empty mellifluousness of a substantial portion of the period's verse.

These stanzas are exceptional in that such general reflections upon the body of contemporary poetry seldom occurred in the early verse of Lower Canada. They are characteristic, however, in that the poetic focus remains centered upon social man, and that their attack was not conducted on the grounds of immorality. Instead, Adams denounced the sentimentalists' lack of ability and ingenuity, their triviality, and their pretentiousness.

The primary social focus of the period's verse was conveyed chiefly, as earlier, by the political poetry. In this vein, the penchant for undistinguished encomiums to King and mother country continued with only slightly diminished fervour, but these were now more frequently interspersed with expressions of a less rigidly nationalistic nature. Portrayals of Napoleon, for instance, were no longer uniformly

negative. Partly because external threats to the province no longer seemed so imminent as in the past, and also because the man himself had been removed from political power, it gradually became possible for English writers in Lower Canada to adopt a more magnanimous view of Bonaparte. A few poets began to respond positively to his political stature. They began to be impressed by the remarkable degree of power which he had amassed, and to indicate their reaction without qualifying reflections upon either the ethics or the morality of his exercise of that power. Adam Kidd, for example, in a poem entitled "Napoleon in Exile," addressed Bonaparte in the following fashion:

> Thou maker of kings, and dethroner of tyrants -
> Thou greatest of mortals this earth has yet known -
> Not even the eye of the proudest aspirants
> Dares look at the crowns made so easily thine own![11]

Even the anapaests, popular in nineteenth century verse for conveying excitement and for expressing heroic themes, are indicative of Kidd's respect for his subject. The poet did go on to remark that Napoleon's achievement had its negative side but he did not slight him:

> 'Tis all but a phantom - the dream of a minute -
> That flits from the circle where life makes a stand -
> And serves but to show, all the pleasures had in it
> Are not worth one half of the cares they command!

In both extracts, Kidd's estimation of Napoleon and his impact is propounded in purely mundane terms. He was impressed by the worldly attainments of the man and was wistful that they must be undercut by life itself. If anything, in this romantic interpretation, it is life which fails Napoleon, rather than he it.

Kidd called Napoleon a "dethroner of tyrants," hence a liberator,

but this role was most often assigned by the early poets of Lower Canada to Britain. They advocated that Britain, as the unique possessor of true freedom and right order, should help other countries to establish the same. British support for the Bourbons of Spain against France was regarded in this light. In fact, that aid was, for the writer of the following, a source of chauvinistic self-righteousness as he reminded his readers that Britain was, in this instance, giving succour to a country which had long been her enemy:

> For Io! Britannia, guardian of the brave,
> From brutal tyrants mighty still to save,
> Sends succours o'er her subject main;
> Infuses confidence in struggling Spain.
> Tho' long, by rulers weak and blind misled
> Castillian forces British blood had shed
> She all forgets, - now only sees
> Their struggle for their liberties;
> She knows, they now with freedom's spirit burn,
> And Gallic chains magnanimously spurn.
>
> O! blest Britannia, fam'd in ev'ry age,
> For glorious efforts 'gainst despotic rage
> Still let thy fleets and armies go
> To curb the world's audacious foe,
> Bold Nelsons and brave Abercrombies rise
> To elevate thy glory to the skies,
> While mutual confidence at home
> Supports the measures of the throne, -
> Acting as one great undivided whole
> By all belov'd or fear'd, from pole to pole!
>
> (*Montreal Gazette*, Sept. 5, 1808)

The poet has carefully pointed out that Britain could act as a liberator not only because of her military and naval prowess, but also because the entire nation was totally united (the ideal of social order).

When Britain failed to act as the champion of liberty, the colonial writer's regard for the mother country did not prevent him from upbraiding her. The failure to aid Greece in that country's

struggle against the Turks produced, for example, the following dramatic expostulation by Levi Adams (an expostulation given particular force by Adams' command of poetic technique: the vigorous and explosive spondaic opening, and the summary impact of the single pentameter line following five tetrameter lines):

> Shame! shame! on our degenerate days -
> When Britons bear a sight like this;
> The generous spirit then decays? -
> The flame, that spirit once could raise,
> Now Freemen from their breasts dismiss,
> And *Judas*-like, betray the GOD they kiss? -
> Oh how unlike the days of old -
> Ere age had let that flame grow cold;
> Time was, that in this holy cause,
> They had not made or doubt or pause
> Their heart and hands had measure kept
> And every sword had from its scabbard leapt.
>
> Does caution check? does fear restrain?
> Away with such unenglish words!
> Yet, if we will not draw those swords,
> Let them in shameful sheaths remain, -
> (*Canadian Magazine*, No. VIII, Feb. 1824)

This poem also makes an appeal to Englishmen on a religious basis, calling for new Christian crusaders against the heathen Turk, but in the balance of the poem the general cry for liberty from a cruel enslaver supersedes the more particular exhortations on behalf of religious freedom.

Freedom was a theme which greatly interested the early poets of Lower Canada, and Britain was not their only ideal of a free society, although it was the only contemporary ideal which they would acknowledge. From history they summoned idealistic conceptions of ancient Greece and Rome. The poem on Greece from which the above lines are quoted contains praise for Greece as it had been and envisions the present compatriots

as attempting to recreate the essence of that society. Adams also composed a lengthy piece entitled "The Fall of Constantinople,"[12] in which he equated both ancient Greece and Rome with liberty and lamented the woeful state of those once majestic civilizations.

But Adams did not remain exclusively elegiac. Like so many of his provincial colleagues, he possessed a positive vision of the future of presently embattled states and of the world in general. Hence, he was able to predict the following for Greece:

> But - lo the glorious Vision shine!
> 'Tis no distempered dream deceives -
> No fictions web that Fancy weaves -
> But Fate, who lifts her veil divine,
> And shows the written destinies within.
> How brightly dawns the future's golden morn!
> The Crescent wanes - its beam for ever shorn!
> Their Country freed, that erst they bled to save,
> The Shades retire of Eld's illustrious dead;
> While Pontis rolls her crimsoned wave,
> Through which the routed Infidel hath fled.
> 'Tis o'er: and dove-eyed Peace descends again, -
> The Sister Muses in her train, -
> With Art and Science joined once more,
> While smiling Plenty sheds her teeming store.
> Her bonds are burst: and where her prison stood -
> How crumbled low, she plants the blessed rood,
> And liberated Greece again adores her God!

It is worth noting that while the optimism has a religious dimension, the vision is primarily of worldly bliss, of which the religious seems a part.

A similar vision of Italy's future happiness is delineated in the following poem:

"Italy"

> O Italy, how beautiful thou art!
> Yet I could weep - for thou art lying, also,
> Low in the dust; and they who come, admire thee

As we admire the beautiful in death.
Thine was a dangerous gift, the gift of beauty.
Would thou hadst less, or were as once thou wast.
Inspiring awe in those who enslave thee!
- But why despair? Twice hast thou lived already;
Twice shown among the nations of the world,
As the sun shines among the lesser lights
Of heaven; and shalt again. The hour shall come,
When they who think to bind the ethereal spirit,
Who, like the eagle cowering o'er his prey,
Watch with quick eye, and strike and strike again
If but a sinew vibrate, shall confess
Their wisdom folly. Even now the flame
Bursts forth where once it burnt so gloriously,
And, dying, left a splendour like the day,
That like the day diffused itself, and still
Blesses the earth - the light of genius, virtue,
Greatness in thought and act, contempt of death,
God-like example. Echoes that have slept
Since ATHENS, LACEDAEMON, were themselves,
Since men invoked 'By those in MARATHON!'
Awake along the Aegean; and the dead,
They of that sacred shore, have heard the call
And thro' the ranks, from wing to wing, are seen
Moving as they once were - instead of rage
Breaking deliberate valour.
(*Canadian Magazine*, No. I, July, 1823)

Here again divinity is evoked, but in an even less emphatic manner, relegated to the single phrase "God-like example." In neither poem is any attempt made to indicate that the fortunate resolution may be attributed to the beneficent intervention or direction of God. The first poem refers to a force named Fate, while the second seems to credit an invincible human spirit with the victory, a spirit which is itself elevated by the prayer-like sonority of the poem's blank verse.

These last few quotations clearly illustrate that the social vision was of great importance to the local poet of Lower Canada, and, furthermore, that this vision was intercontinental in its dimensions. Of course, international events in North America also commanded

a considerable share of poetic attention, but here too a new flexibility in attitude became apparent. There was still a good deal of anti-Americanism, but the general shedding of garrison inflexibility permitted friendlier expressions as well. These were climaxed by the poetic utterances of American emigrés who retained and testified to positive feelings towards their former homeland:

> Still dear to my heart are New England's white mountains,
> Their lofty steep summits envelop'd with snow;
> And dear are those streamlets, and bright limpid fountains,
> That ceaseless and murmuring meander below.
>
> And still round this heart former friendship is twining,
> For those friends of my childhood shall ever be dear;
> And oft in their absence when sad and repining,
> I remember their love with sincerity's tear.
>
> But far away, I've bid adieu to those scenes;
> In a distant, though lovely and beautiful land,
> I must wait the fair smiles of an unclouded day,
> And the opening of Providence's bountiful hand.
>
> And ye friends of my heart, so kind and sincere;
> On whose bosoms so oft I have fondly reclined,
> Believe that pure friendship I cultivate here,
> Which a solace affords to my wandering mind.
>
> (*The Scribbler*, Aug. 29, 1822)

This poem is typical of exile verse in the Canadian colonies. Separation from friends, and, in other instances, family, was felt most. Second on the list of regrets was separation from a particular locale, which is also expressed here. What is not expressed here, indeed what was almost never expressed at all in Canadian poetry of exile, is sadness at the separation of the author from his native social and political structure.

There had been, as was seen in the previous chapter, little evocation of the theme of exile in the poetry of Lower Canada. Such

expression, as in the Maritimes, occurred in this later period when the posturings of genteel sentimentality became popular. It is curious too that, as in the Maritimes, the Irish poets indulged most, and not exclusively about their Irish homes. Mrs. Blennerhassett, for instance, showed a greater preference for her more immediate Ohio home, although Adam Kidd frequently pined for Erin, as did Robert Sweeny. The following poem is an example of the latter's professions of continued longing for the old land:

"Home"

When far from thee, my native Isle,
Along the Diamond-Capé I roam,
Though grand the scene - my heart the while,
Loves best the heath-clad hills at home.

And when upon that bright Cape's side
I view the great Saint Lawrence foam,
My heart prefers the simple tide
That laves its pebbly bed at home.[13]

This poem purportedly expresses the feelings of one newly arrived from Europe, but the attachment did not always remain so ardent. With the passage of time, the inevitable intervention of death severed the ties of family and friends, ties which constituted the emigrant's strongest bond with his homeland. When these were gone, it was possible for the poet to profess indifference and even antipathy to his mother country, as the writer of the lines below did. He mentioned that on his first departure from England he had been most distraught but continued:

Twenty years have passed away since then,
And now - I stand upon this deck,
And see the self-same cliffs, which ne'er again

Shall meet my glance; and yet, as little do I seek
Of them, or what is past, - as of my future fate: -
Which, here, in all the majesty of pride, I do defy:
The future's as the past - dark, drear and desolate -
And yet my stoic heart's unmoved, unwet my callous eye.

But now what art thou [England] to me, but the land
Where Happiness lies wither'd, blasted, trodden to the earth,
Affection there, no more shall soothe with accents bland,
Or Pleasure gladden with her notes of mirth: -
Death, with unsparing hand, has severed every tie,
Save those which Hate has smother'd in my heart; -
And can I then gaze on thee with a loving eye
Thou sepulchre of Hope, or sigh to part!

Ah no! the sacred heart shall never more give way
To high impassioned feeling; - Imagination all in vain
Strives to renew her dreams: - Indifference assumes the sway,
And throws o'er mantling Hope, her icy chain
And what, tho' Happiness be dead! - still Care
Shall never heat the brain, or cause the heart to swell: -
Away with thought for aye: - I ne'er again shall wear
Her galling chain: - and now, my native land, farewell.
(*Montreal Gazette*, June 25, 1829)

Still, the poet's declared indifference was qualified by the pervasive gloom conveyed by imagery, diction and the slow-moving heptameter line.

Poetry of exile was not restricted solely to immigrants coming to Canada. In Lower Canada, there were also a surprising, but gratifying, number of poems expressing sadness at the prospect of leaving Canada, and asserting that an attachment for the land would always exist:

Believe me while memory holds her firm sway,
Remembrance of Canada ever will be
The heart's warmest thought on life's cheeriest day:-
The subject of converse most pleasing to me.
(*Montreal Herald*, June 12, 1822)

The basis of regret is the same in this as in other exile poetry. Social contracts would be cherished despite the fact that they must be broken. The land in which these contacts had been established and long enjoyed would also be cherished because of the association of pleasure

and place:

> To part from those in life most dear,
> Alas! that thought, how dark, how drear.
>
> . . .
>
> Oh! Yes, lov'd Canada still will be,
> In memory always dear to me,
> (*Montreal Herald*, Sept. 4, 1822)

In these lines, conventional as the mode of exile poetry might be, lay the beginnings of a feeling of attachment to Canada which would some day flower into literary nationalism and a mature, literary culture. It is fitting that this feeling should be evinced in social terms: literature is a social art and culture is the identity of a society. It was of course some time before maturity in the writing of verse would be achieved by Canadian poets, but attention to the internal character and operations of its own society seems always to have been present in the early verse of Lower Canada. Some poets may have written with a thorough and avid affirmation of their British citizenship, but many of them simultaneously wrote with their eyes upon their own colony.

One of the things which most impressed the local poets about their colony was its relatively peaceful record and they remarked frequently upon this characteristic as Canada's unique advantage. Correlative to this, a number of poems were produced which celebrated peace in general and attacked war. It is quite probable, although they did not say so specifically, that these pro-peace, anti-war sentiments were partially provoked by the poets' realization of their own vulnerability to the immediate and the ultimate effects of war. Whatever the motivation, encomiums to peace, such as the following, were not uncommon:

O influential Peace, to thee belong,
Of arts the germ, of harmony the song,
The pleasures riches yield, and all the throng
  Of joys that flow from wealth's ascendancy.

To thee, from gorgeous altars, grateful rise,
In clouds, our fragrant incense to the skies,
Whilst fat of oxen, and of sheep supplies
  The lofty flame's divine, fierce, brilliancy.

Under thy influence loud resound the fields,
With manly sports, whilst music transport yields,
And, full with joyous wine, each peasant reels,
  Lo! e'en the spider plies its industry;

And undisturbed alike, by deeds of death,
Th' ensanguin'd two-edged sword sleeps in its sheath;
Mute is the martial trumpet's brazen breath,
  And 'stead of warfare, wantons revelry.

In every house, luxurious banquets see
Each sex, and every age, with jollity,
The hour enjoying; e'en the child, with glee,
  Hymns its shrill tones to chaunt of liberty.
(*The Scribbler*, Apr. 28, 1825)

The writer of this poem was clearly more interested in the social advantages of peace than in ascribing to it any moral or spiritual benefits. His aaab, cccb, etc., rhyme scheme highlights the social "virtues" of "liberty," "revelry," and "industry," and suggests by association that these are productive of "brilliancy" and "ascendancy."

A similar focus upon social rather than upon religious or moral consequences characterized the anti-war poetry of Lower Canada. The bleak vision of life which sometimes predominated in this verse may suggest moral undertones, as is the case with the following excerpt from Levi Adams' "Tecumthé," but neither morality nor spirituality was overtly evoked:

> . . . Pride - whose cause hath ever led
> To populate the grave with dead,
> Beheld the hosts of either land
> With daring heart, with furious hand,
> Upholding with contending might
> By wrongful acts, - the claim of "right."
> Vain hope, - to think that justice can
> Reform the restless aim of man, -
> Time, with its circling glass hath run
> And seen its cause, a moment won; -
> Fame, with its laurel'd wreath, hath crown'd
> The brow, - ennobled at its sound,
> The Warrior's arms, - the Patriot's fire,
> The Sage's lore, and the Minstrel's lyre,
> All have upborne, and proudly told
> Of justice war, by action bold;
> No clime, but can sure claim advance
> To win a smile from Honour's glance; -
> But wherefore? - Time, hath prov'd it vain, -
> Earth must as sure, relapse again
> In terror's and contention's reign,
> And hear fierce Discord raise its cry,
> And Vengeance frown with blood-shot eye,
> And Rapine make its stern demand,
> And Slaughter stalk with murderous hand,
> Till Faith and Justice soon forgot,
> Leave strife, the tyrant of the spot.[14]

Adams here fixed his attention upon the future of social man and could regrettably envision only continued, periodic conflict. In his view there was no such thing as a war to end war or to establish a lasting peace.

A less idealistic "virtue" which Lower Canadian versifiers ascribed to their new land was its material fruitfulness. They envisioned the conquest and domestication of the land as a great and glorious European achievement:

> When golden Commerce, fraught with honest zeal,
> First o'er the Atlantic, urged her loaded keel;
> And winds and waves, at length auspicious, bore
> Her proofs of Science to the Mountain's shore;
> Where Nature, lovely in her wildest vest,
> Beam'd Emerald bright, within her water's breast,

A Paradise of wealth! - but yet unknown,
The sullen Indian, claim'd it as his own,
And idly gaz'd on blest Creation's pow'r,
Without a thought beyond the present hour!
But when aloft fair Europe's Flag unfurl'd
Her march of silence, won this sylvan world!
Thus wisdom dawn'd: then savage darkness frown'd,
And backward drew from off the enlighten'd ground!-
Now mansion'd o'er, a spacious city rears
Her silvery Domes above her crowded Piers;
Whence far and wide, the Treasures of her soil,
Expanding comfort, cheer the labourer's toil.
(*Canadian Review*, No. IV, Feb., 1826)

To this writer and his colleagues nature tamed meant nature exploited for the material benefit of man. From this premise it was logical to agree, as they did, that the Indian from whom they took the land was unknowingly wasting it by not utilizing its commercial capacities.

This view of the Indian's essential ignorance qualified the poetic portrayals of individual Indian leaders. Tecumseh, probably the most heroic and the noblest Indian in the estimation of white Canadians, was praised at some length by Levi Adams in a poem entitled "Tecumthé," but was ultimately found to lack the achievements of civilized learning without which he could not be admitted to the first rank of the truly great:

. . . [he] wanted but the polish'd mind
Civilization's wand supplies.
To make him mighty midst mankind,
When Learning by its magic power,
Like the bright sun-beam of the sky,
With genial influence, every hour
Brings nature to maturity;
This, was the only art requir'd
In him, whose spirit, here expir'd
To leave, more brilliantly enshrin'd
The actions of a lofty mind,
And hand another being's name
To grace the immortal page of Fame.
(*Tales of Chivalry and Romance*, p. 172)

There were a few poets who possessed a less disparaging opinion of the Indian and his physical environment, and a less positive assessment of civilization. These writers still focused upon social man, but they credited the Indian with having a society, whereas, the preceding poets tended to ignore that possibility. Moreover, men who were influenced by Rousseauistic philosophic primitivism, men such as Adam Kidd, professed to see true order and liberty contained within the civilization of the North American Indian rather than within that of Britain or Europe:

> Oh, happy home! where nought but nature's plan
> Is felt, and practised, by contented man;
> No shifting system here we ever trace,
> But all things have their own, their proper place,
> No half-taught Noble, from the Charter-school,
> Whose wealth, and vanity, are sure to rule,
> Can here disturb that peace, that tranquil good,
> Which cheers the freeman of the boist'rous wood.[15]

The Indian represented for Kidd, as for Rousseau, natural man - simple, free, and as yet uncorrupted by the evils of artificial society. His simplicity permitted him a grace and joy which no amount of formal learning could allow:

> And I would tell the polished man,
> Brought up in Europe's fashioned plan,
> That never could his formal art,
> Or all that school-taught lore be given,
> Such graceful happiness impart,
> As cheers the Indian's forest heaven -
> (*The Huron Chief*, p. 41)

In fact, in this last line, the Indian's simplicity becomes equivalent to Eden-like innocence as Kidd evokes overtones of the Biblical Garden (which he does several times throughout the poem) and implicitly claims for the Indian the status of unfallen man.

The pro-Indian poets were not so caught up in the celebration of their romantic ideal that they did not realize the consequence for the Indian of the white man's arrival in North America. Kidd's lengthy poem allegorically presents the collision between the two civilizations and denounces at length the white man's hypocrisy which permitted him to exploit the native peoples in the name of religion and to betray them constantly by utilizing the natives' nobility and magnanimity. This betrayal is allegorically summarized and presented in the fate of old Skenandow, the Huron Chief, who was ultimately killed by men whose cowardice and treachery he had already forgiven and whom he had saved from execution.

Kidd's presentation was sentimental and unrealistic in its detail but nevertheless represented a fundamentally correct historical fact, as did also William Fitz Hawley's similarly sentimental lamentation of the Indian's gradual obliteration by the relentless advance of European man:

> Past are these scenes; and passing too, are they
> Who o'er this western world once held the sway.
>
> . . .
>
> Far in the western wild the Red-man still
> Securely wanders by his native rill;
> But when the Pale-face beckons him away
> From his last home, where shall the wanderer stray?
> Sons of the injured! o'er the western main
> The suns descends, never to rise again.[16]

Civilization was coming to Canada, but one can see that the process was not represented exclusively as an unmixed blessing by those who were helping to bring that civilization. The early poets of Lower Canada possessed a sufficiently realistic outlook to evaluate with some

measure of accuracy and to record at least in a general way some of the negative consequences of Europe's westward march.

The realistic recording of contemporary life embraced too some less profound facets of colonial existence, and did so frequently with satiric colouring. The writer of the following lines turned his attention with bemused mockery (and with skillful management of poetic rhythms) to the social pastime of dancing:

> Get all the ladies that you can,
> And let each lady have a man;
> Let them, in a circle placed,
> Take the partners round the waist;
> Then, by slow degrees advance,
> Until the walk becomes a dance;
> Then the twirling, face to face,
> Without variety of grace:
> Round and round and never stopping,
> Now and then a little hopping,
> When you're wrong, to make things worse,
> Should one couple be perverse,
> And in the figure be perplex'd, -
> Let them be knock'd down by the next.
> "Quicker now," the ladies cry;
> They rise, they twirl, they swing, they fly;
> Puffing, blowing, jostling, squeezing, -
> Very odd, but very pleasing, -
> 'Till every lady plainly shows,
> (Whatever else she may disclose,)
> *Reserve* is not among her faults:
> Reader! thus it is to *Malta*.
> (*Quebec Mercury*, Nov. 24, 1818)

Occasionally, the satire possessed a bitter edge and often when it did so that edge was turned upon male-female romantic relationships, to the detriment of the female. She was sometimes described as a morally weak creature, inescapably a prey to her own and to man's baser instincts. Her fidelity was declared to be easily corrupted by gold and by her own natural, pleasure-seeking proclivities:

A woman's heart - a woman's heart
Still for novelty it burns;
Still for this to every art,
Like the weathercock it turns,
And oh believe me, you will find,
Even when you think that heart most true,
Its owner more, far more inclin'd
To pleasure than she is to you.
(*Montreal Herald*, Aug. 23, 1826)

Colonial male chauvinists would certainly delight in these sentiments, as they would also enjoy and no doubt support the following statement that woman is very low on the list of man's necessities:

Sweet Goddess! always grant enough
To purchase me cigars and snuff;
Then let thy servant never lack
The needful for his mouth and back;
Add to these gifts a glass of grog,
A well-made gun, and well-train'd dog;
Lastly, to crown the goods of life,
Bestow him a submissive wife,
Whose principal attraction lies
In making puddings, tarts and pies.
Thus, for this sublunary wealth,
He'll puff thy praise, and quaff thy health;
Spanish tobacco-smoke shall rise
In grateful incense to the skies;
And thy shrine, with choice fragments strew'd,
Begreased with fat, with grog bedew'd,
Prove his respect and gratitude;
But if not *all* these blessings can
Be granted to the prayers of man;
If, of these articles, 'tis fit
That he should choose *one* to omit,
Then, from the list the wife erase,
But oh! of thy exceeding grace,
With a good cook supply her place.
(*The Scribbler*, May 16, 1822)

As anything more than a servant, woman is completely expendable. The implications are extreme but the sentiment was not uncommon, especially to eighteenth century English verse where it was expressed as early as 1700 in John Pomfret's *The Choice*, albeit in a more subdued and more elegant manner.

As romantic sentimentality grew, there were poets whose opinions were diametrically opposed to the one generally set forth by the poems above. These versifiers described woman as man's spiritual and moral beacon, directress of his destiny:

> Oh! Thou by Heaven ordain'd to be
> Arbitress of man's destiny!
> From thy dear breast one tender sigh -
> One glance from thine approving eye -
> Can raise or bend him at will,
> To virtue's noblest flights, or worst extremes of ill.
>
> Woman! 'tis thine to cleanse his heart
> From every gross, unholy part;
> Thine, in domestic solitude,
> To win him to be wise and good;
> His pattern, guide, and friend to be,
> *And give him back the Heaven he forfeited for thee.*
> (*The Scribbler*, July 12, 1821)

Without her, man might be spiritually lost; his present existence would be oppressively bleak:

> Oh Woman, thou star of our lonely sphere,
> How dear is the light of thy love!
> It leads us onward to glory here,
> And guides us to peace above.
> Though the world were bright as Poets sing,
> Yet its brightest spot would be
> More dark than the Angel of Terror's wing,
> If it were not illumed by thee.
> (Sweeny, *Odds and Ends*, p. 72)

In this poem, the focus begins to turn back from the moral and spiritual realms to the mundane, as Sweeny emphasizes woman's contribution to man in this life. He was content to claim that she could alleviate life's darkness. The following poem asserts extravagantly that she could create paradise wherever she went:

> When woman first from Eden ran,
> 'Twas PARADISE no more,
> Nor can the mind or foot of man
> Its once famed bowers explore;

But hence our every blessing flows,
And all our joys arise,
For woman, whereso'er she goes,
CREATES A PARADISE.
(*The Scribbler*, July 5, 1821)

The same range of treatment is accorded to woman in the substantial amount of love and courtship poetry produced before 1830 by the writers of Lower Canada. A large proportion of this is conventional love poetry, addressed to individual female figures whether real or imaginary, in praise of their physical beauty, their spiritual and moral goodness, and their ability to render life a paradise for the suitor should his petition be accepted. One woman was praised for the beauty of her mind by a poet who was intensely conscious of time's deleterious effects upon physical beauty, but who found spiritual considerations no recompense. Another lady, in a poem reflecting Canadian circumstances, received tribute for evoking a love which erased her suitor's feeling of exile:

Oh when I left my native shore,
I little thought to love once more;
But then I little hoped to find,
So fair a form, so pure a mind.
Then here, where nature is most grand,
I'll make a second native land:
And only with my life resign,
My love for it, and Caroline.
(*Montreal Herald*, Nov. 8, 1826)

Not all love suits were depicted as pleasurable or successful. The early poets also produced a number of conventional love complaints beseeching cool and haughty females to look upon them more kindly, or berating others for being cruelly scornful. Much of this verse was maudlin and mawkish and, not surprisingly, it provoked satirical attacks of which the following is one of the most severe:

Go, sickly sons of sentiment, and whine
A puling sonnet to a lady's brow;
Go, sob in love-sick stanzas and repine,
Go, and with spaniel meanness faun and bow.
(*Montreal Gazette*, June 8, 1822)

Other satirists mocked the whole convention of love poetry. They composed comic verse declaring love for a drunken floozy, admitting that their amorous attentions were motivated by the fair one's finances, or, as in the following, reflecting upon the favours of an ugly woman:

Said I to my love t'other day,
If your eyes could get rid of their squint,
And your ringlets could lose by the way,
Their grease and their fiery tint;
If the nose that curls over your lip
And in hues with the rainbow vies,
Could drop half an inch off its tip,
And a few of its thousand dyes.
If your chin of its pasture were mown,
And your gums own'd a second tooth;
If your voice could but alter its tone,
And each word that you utter'd were truth;
Then might you hope to noose me.

But now, while with twinkling glare,
Each eye peeps askance from its porch;
While your matted locks stream to the air,
Like the flames of a flickering torch.
While your nose, and its neighbour, the chin,
Seen straining each other to kiss,
Enclosing your mouth within,
A sort of parenthesis.
While your chin frizles up to your cheek,
And but one splinter'd tooth meets the eye;
While each note of your voice is a squeak,
And each word from your lips is a lie,
I humbly beg you'll excuse me.
(*Montreal Herald*, Aug. 30, 1826)

This mockery extended even so far as to suggest, in this male dominated society, a comic equality between the sexes. Some of the casualness and humour which has always invested depictions of masculine sexuality was also accorded to feminine sexuality. Rather than censuring

feminine infidelity and sexual promiscuity, some poets were willing to permit the female, in verse, sexual freedom equal to that of the male:

> Whence, in these days of ours, I glad am
> That any fascinating madam,
> If she has charms, or if she's had 'em,
> Is not restricted to one Adam -
> (*The Scribbler*, Jan. 27, 1825)

And, with Chaucerian delight, a ribald story of feminine infidelity could be related as much to ridicule male posturing as to censure female libidinousness:

> There were two country bumpkins, hearty fellows;
> One was a miller, t'other blew the bellows,
> Shod horses, and so forth; and both were wed
> To wives with merry tails, both in and out of bed.
> One day came Thomas, running to the mill;
> And cried, "Would you believe it, neighbour Will;"
> Who then was standing, whistling, at the door;
> 'My wife, I do declare's an arrant whore,
> "For there, behind the stack, I seed her lying,
> "Flat on her back, with all her colours flying,
> "Tossing the squire up in the air, like cork,
> "And that, sure, is no easy piece of work;
> "His worship was not born to be a jockey,
> "And's heavier now, by being a little rocky. -
> "I never thought it, Will, as I'm a sinner,
> "Our Moll had so much sparkish mettle in her;
> "For tho' she's funny, when we two are sporting,
> "I thought her chaste, as in the days of courting; -
> "A wife as virtuous as your's or any,
> "That wo'n't turn up for every brawny zany."
> Then Will laugh'd loud, "Ha! Tom, so you're a cuckold!
> "You'd not wear horns, if your Moll had been buckled
> "To such as me, who thresh and grind away,
> "With Nell at all times, thro' the blessed day:
> "I make her pockets ring, when I take pains,
> "*Jingling her bunch of keys about*, like chains:
> "And yet no sempstress, sitting with her thimble
> "All day, can be more mettlesome and nimble
> "Or readier at grinding after supper,
> "Because she knows I always fill her hopper;
> "And I can tell by th' *glistening of her eyes*,
> "I am the only he that gets between her thighs. -
> "But I'll go see the show: where did you catch 'em?"
> "Behind that stack," says Tom, "the devil fetch 'em:

"Do run and look, and if the jade's there still,
"After the squire, you may take *your* turn, Will."
So off the miller went, peeping and listening;
Heard *keys a jingling*, and saw *eyes a glistening*.
But, to be sure, he crept a little nigher,
And then, convinced, cried, "Thomas, you're a liar:
"I see them at it, - but see clear and well,
"'Tis not your Moll, but my own wife, mad Nell;
"I hear the peal she's ringing with her pockets,
"And see her peepers turn round in their sockets."
"Ah, ha!" says Tom, "pray who's the cuckold now?
"But all men married cuckolds are, I know;
"And, for your consolation, Moll's as bad -
"I catch'd her, last time, at it, with the lad -
"The sturdy chap, who, Monday, came to say,
"His master's horses must be shod that day.
"But I knew well, and would have laid my life,
"If I had bid you go to see *your* wife,
"Playing the whore, I should not be believed;
"So, as I hate my friend should be deceived;
"I made you itch to scamper to the stack,
"To see *my wife*, heels upwards, on her back."
(*The Scribbler*, July 8, 1824)

Samuel Hull Wilcocke's *Scribbler*, the magazine in which the above poem was published, was the province's unrivalled leader for blatant sexuality in poetic expression. Language as frank and as coarse as the above was exceptional for any other colonial publication of that period. Even so, sexual *double entendre* of a pronounced nature was employed in verse published by other presses.

Even Levi Adams made use of sexual punning in his poem *The Charivari*. At one point in the tale, he related that someone responded to the news of the hero's forthcoming marriage to the not-so-fair Annette with the coarse declaration that "Baptiste had got in a net."

The lines quoted in these recent pages reveal an amazing degree of boldness in the use of sexuality in the early verse of Lower Canada, but they do not establish the limit of that boldness. The boundaries

of sexual coarseness are reached by the following lines in which a mistress reassures her lover of her continued fidelity:

> "You fool," said the fair-one, "you're out of your head,
> "Such talk isn't fit for our parrot:
> "I never once wish for a comrade in bed,
> "For difference there's none between single or wed,
> "Whilst the garden produces a carrot.
> (*The Scribbler*, Dec. 26, 1822)

One cannot deny that sexual material was liberally employed in the creation of early Lower Canadian verse at least partially because the writers took delight in erotic titillation for its own sake. One must also point out that a satiric purpose persistently accompanied sexual themes satirizing woman in several poems and parodying romantic pretensions in some others. It was also employed to conduct personal attacks against particular individuals. Wilcocke used sexual ridicule to attack a fur company official whom he regarded as an implacable enemy. In one poem, Wilcocke described this man as a profligate in pursuit of an Indian whore.

Personal attacks were not unusual in the early verse of Lower Canada, although they were not all conducted with the weaponry of sexual satire. Most were straightforward invective and were of negligible interest since their figures cannot be identified and since they generally possess no redeeming aesthetic qualities. One other notable example of a poet venting personal animosity in verse occurred when Adam Kidd attacked his former religious superior, Bishop Mountain of Quebec. The two men disagreed upon the character and stature of Byron. Kidd saw hypocrisy and self-interest in the Bishop's position:

For me, I hate all whining cant;
And, doubly so, the Churchman's rant,
If even sent from sides of iron,
By hill, by dale, by grot, or fountain,
Against the great, immortal BYRON!
In all the poising of a M***T**N,
Who nothing loves, but what's his own,
Or some *thing* else that wears a gown,
(Kidd, *The Huron Chief*, p. 45)

In attacking Mountain, whose family had already almost attained the status of an institution in Quebec, Kidd displayed, as did Wilcocke in his sallies against commercial and government leaders, the daring of which Lower Canadian poetry was capable.

Other important social institutions of the colony were subjected to the mockery of poetic satire in this early period. The colony's legal system occasioned a number of attacks. Levi Adams, who was himself a lawyer, composed a lengthy assault on lawyers and the courts,[17] criticizing the pedantic pretensions of the one and the sterile conventions of the other, and the inability of both to mete out efficient justice to the citizenry. The system was too consistently caught up in its own esoteric niceties said both Adams and the composer of the following lines:

Flaws in the indictment fill their mighty minds,
An orator, each word, each letter finds,
Whole codes of law the laboring speaker vents
But not one syllable of common sense -
He urges precedents, distinctions nice
And scraps of Latin, with untir'ing voice, -
The Court is puzzled - soon the sacred tome
Of East or Chitty drives conviction home -
The knave escapes - applause is buzzed around
While baffled Justice sneakes from off the ground
(*Montreal Gazette*, Nov. 21, 1828)

This criticism could apply to courts and lawyers anywhere, but the

comparative frequency of its expression in the verse of Lower Canada indicates an unusual concern with the legal system. This concern was undoubtedly stimulated by the province's unique circumstances. After the conquest, the new British rulers felt compelled, in order to placate their French subjects, to preserve elements of French law while introducing elements of British law as well. The confusing and unwieldy legal system thus produced was extremely unpopular with the English-speaking inhabitants and irritating in its inadequate implementation to the French. The uncertain future of this amorphous and fragile arrangement naturally induced in the provincial mind some cynicism concerning law as a whole.

By contrast, religion, another major source of tension in Quebec, was infrequently the topic of Lower Canadian verse between 1815 and 1830. Some anti-Catholicism remained but comparatively little as the English-speaking community apparently felt less and less of a threat from that quarter. There was, in fact, little expression of religious sectarianism of any kind.

One poem did deal in a humorous, though not trivial, fashion with the old theological dispute between the believers in salvation by faith alone and the believers in salvation by good works. The poet maintained the period's focus upon social conduct by supporting the latter belief. He depicted a judge rebuking a criminal who professed a belief in the efficacy of faith alone:

> "You see yourself upon the brink!
> "And in this instance, don't you think:
> "You might on *works* have more relied,
> "For here you find, your faith must fail,

"So left about, and march to jail:
"Your *works* not *faith* must now be tried.
(*Montreal Herald*, Feb. 15, 1823)

No specific religious sect is mentioned in this poem. With the exception of Catholicism, particular sects were very rarely the subject of verse in Lower Canada's early period. It is indicative of the social emphasis of this verse that some poetic attention was paid to the semi-religious Masonic Order whose vision centres upon this world rather than upon the next. According to the Masons, the secrets of God's creation can be fathomed by man here and now, if he is a Mason:

How wide disseminated are the laws,
How grand the body of the mystic whole;
None but the Mason, staunch in virtue's cause,
Can e'er conceive the secrets of its soul.

Could wild depravity stalk unconfin'd,
And alienate from virtue, worldly realms,
Seek but the craft where brothers bind,
There blooms the faith, no earthly change overwhelms.

Could universal gloom o'erspread the earth,
And dark despair usurp the throne of joy;
Search but the heart, the Mason's seat of worth,
There hope's bright gem is found without alloy.

If sordid avarice penurious dared,
Profane the gen'ral bosom of mankind;
E'en then the latent spark that mercy spared,
Mild Charity! is in his breast enshrined!

Truth is the anthem of his matin hours,
When piety inspires his soul in pray'r;
Relief from his warm heart, like midnight flow'rs,
Sheds from its fragrance through the desert air.

But O! the faithful, fond, fraternal love,
That beams o'er nature through his gen'rous smile,
Or those who sing beneath, or soar above,
But chiefly craftsmen, know him free from guile.
(*Montreal Herald*, Feb. 11, 1826)

The one thing significantly different here from other verse of this period which focused upon man is that the Mason emphasized human emotion rather than human reason. In this, however, he agrees with late eighteenth and early nineteenth century sentimentalism.

The dearth of sectarianism in this period's verse was accompanied by an equal dearth of latitudinarianism. Adam Kidd, in "The Huron Chief," did profess to believe that all Christian sects were equal - that is, they were equally bad, especially insofar as their treatment of the North American Indian was concerned. In remarking that the wedding ceremony of TA-POO-KA and ALKWANKAUGH was justly hidden from Christian view, Kidd accused Christianity of bringing the ravages of war to a peaceful land and people, of indulging in violent and pretentious sectarianism, and of ruthlessly exploiting the Indian:

> The wedding over and unseen
> The holy rites - and all between -
> Because inferior is the name -
> And I believe a just recorder -
> Of Christian - honoured by his fame!
> Who first for peace brought foul disorder,
> And in Religion's pathway threw
> Sectarian seed, which rankly grew.
>
> Ye jarring Creeds-men, why thus strive
> To keep the impious flame alive -
> That flame which discontent has brought,
> And even now its crusade making,
> In crimes like those yourselves have taught -
> The social tie of friendship breaking -
> Because to you, you think is given
> A nigher way to march to heaven!!
>
> It is a foul - unholy crime,
> Stamped as the open page of time -
> To plunder Nature's humble child
> Of all the gifts for him intended,
> And scattered through his forest wild,

Till Christian charity extended
Her bounteous hand, and made him know,
For bliss exchanged - a real woe.

The Missionary evils brought,
By those who first Religion taught -
Forgive the phrase - had more of hell - -
And all the crimes with it connected -
Than ever yet were known to dwell
With those oft called the lost - neglected -
The barb'rous Indian - Savage race -
The outcasts of the human race!
(*The Huron Chief*, pp. 94, 105-107)

Kidd, who studied to be a missionary teacher, found the clergy especially culpable in the white man's un-Christ-like treatment of the Indian. He was not the only poet to attack the clergy, nor was this the only ground upon which they were attacked. Their conduct within the white community was also criticized occasionally in verse, producing the kind of comic ridicule which one sees in the following lines:

Beside yon gaudy fence that skirts the way,
Old proser stands his plumage to display;
Full of conceit, his new-cock'd hat contains
A skull indeed, but, pray, where are the brains?
Faith, charity and temperance should be there,
And thy religion's nought but - forms of prayer.
And avarice clasps thy hand, and grinds the poor,
Driving the shivering pauper from thy door.
The stinted miser thou might'st teach a lesson,
(As hypocrites may go to school to _____)
And by example learn to hoard the pelf,
No idol worshipping but only self;
Self too 's his god, when, sitting down to cards,
His sole delight his talk he interlards
With scraps of Latin, from the ancient bards;
Or fills each chasm with a silly pun,
At a friend's table where he takes the run:
Nor be't forgotten that when Bacchus reigns,
The parson hiccups out parnassian strains,
The price of salmon, turkies, geese and rooks,
Old Proser knows much better than his books.
Sermons, new vamp'd, and treaties divine,
Are heap'd in crowds in Cloacina's shrine;
Or, if perchance the week is spent in play,

He snatches one upon the Sabbath-day;
With moony eyes and in half slumbering tone,
Palms it on us, poor rustics, for his own.
Such are thy virtues, Proser, these are thine,
But most at whist, 't is there thou cut 'st a shine;
Too short the live-long night, too short the week,
For those who Sunday-morn the priest would seek,
Will find him still at play; or dozy drunk,
With parched tongue and eyeballs red and sunk.
Such is our parson; such the man of God,
Who to poor sinners points to heaven the road.
(*The Scribbler*, June 19, 1823)

In the total balance, religion, institutionalized or otherwise, did not fare well in the verse of Lower Canada. Criticism of religion was almost as frequent, and was more effective, than conventional praise of religious events or figures. Nor was religion often celebrated as an anodyne for life's ills, although some such expression did exist, as the following fragments prove:

Religion's holy rites, have taught
That resignation is our part;
Assuage thy mind, with madness fraught
In mercy, heal the bleeding heart.
(*Montreal Herald*, Jan. 23, 1819)

RELIGION! gives the soul relief,
And points the way to purest bliss -
RELIGION! dries each tear of grief,
And makes us e'en a heaven of this.
(Kidd, *The Huron Chief*, p. 176)

Religion can bring consolation in this world, primarily through the anticipation of promised bliss through death.

In this vanity of human wishes vein, even the successful attainment of fame could not make life seem positive. Napoleon himself only became food for worms:

Thy flesh is creeping now -
And when thy hawk-like glance shot forth -
The mother worm now twines around her young; -

And on thy brain perhaps
The larger reptiles batten.
Where dwelt the mind -
Before which crowns and sceptres crumbled
And conquer'd Europe crouch'd -
The worm of many folds lifts up its head
To breathe a little from its dainty feast! -
(*Montreal Gazette*, Mar. 5, 1829)

Death is no positive release in this poem, as it so often was in early Maritime poetry.

Life was not always depicted so gloomily. Some poets insisted that it was possible to be happy here and now, even though life was undeniably ephemeral and troublesome. They declared that there were positive aspects to existence in the midst of the problems, and suggested that one could enjoy life by focusing upon these:

Blyth and Gay

While in this sad world I dwell,
Long I've thought and mark'd it well,
That it's far the wisest way,
Ever to be *Blyth* and gay.

Life's a taper - soon is spent,
Shall I waste it, and repent?
No - but while on earth I stay,
I'll be ever *Blyth* and gay.

What tho' round, the landscape lours,
Scatt'ring snow and sleet and showers;
I've a shelter - candor say,
Should I not be *Blyth* and gay?

What tho' maladies assail
A body made by Nature, frail;
There is respite, when I may
Surely still be *Blyth* and gay.

Children sweet, and faithful wife,
Music, book, friends, coffee, pipe,
These can guile the ling'ring day;
These can make me *Blyth* and gay.

While the rapid moments fly,
Thus I'll live, and thus I'll die,
Holding it the wisest way,
Ever to be *Blyth* and gay.
(*Montreal Herald*, Feb. 21, 1818)

This poem tends toward hedonism only slightly, but some poets of Lower Canada, especially Robert Sweeny, sought to counter the threat of hardship, time and death with overtly hedonistic sentiments. In the following poem, only one of many, Sweeny celebrated the pursuit of wine, women and song:

I wish to live, remote from strife,
A life of ease and pleasure;
So strove to find what sort of life
Affords the greatest measure.
I asked th'opinion of my friends,
Love, Bacchus, and Apollo;
But each a different course commends,
And which do you think I follow?

Love bids me pay my homage still
To Beauty night and morning;
And Bacchus hiccups "drink thy fill,
A fig for Woman's scorning!"
Apollo hints that nought but song
The wings of Time can cripple;
So, just to please them, all day long
I love, and sing, and tipple.
(Sweeny, *Odds and Ends*, p. 28)

Sweeny merely professed hedonism; he did not attempt to justify it other than by its own inherent appeal. The writer of the following verses, however, in the tradition of Herrick, Marvell, and Prior, tied his professed hedonism to divine justification:

1

You who upon my pleasures frown,
Because in wine my cares I drown,
Because, unclasp'd in woman's arms,
Life for me would lose its charms -
Because I every thing contemn

That is not center'd all in them;
Say, if these precious joys I leave,
Shall I longer life receive?
If these I quit, can you ensure
That life for ever shall endure?
Say, will it then from cares be free? -
Oh, no! then taste the joys of life with me.

2

The stroke of death you can't remove -
Why life without life's pleasures prove?
Death will approach, or soon or late,
And seize the fair, the brave, the great;
Then be it mine betimes to drain
Joy's bowl, nor foolishly refrain
To taste the pleasures in my power;
Since come it will that fatal hour
When we shall sigh for pleasures left,
Of means t'enjoy them all bereft.
Since in the tomb no bliss is found,
Then let your hours with love and wine be crown'd.

3

But when gay visions of delight
No longer swim before my sight,
When my strength fades, as age comes on,
And love's dear sports too soon are gone,
Then let me quit life's cheerless stage,
And thus escape the pains of age.
Why should we vainly wish to live,
When life can only tortures give?
The bitter thought of days gone by,
When with a retrospective eye,
We muse upon our loves of yore,
And start with agony to think they are no more!

4

This is my wish - but be it now
My care with flowers to wreathe my brow,
With sparkling wine to crown the bowl,
Regardless of their stern control
Who deem the joys of wine and love
Hateful to HIM who reigns above!
Ah! little do they know the mind
Of HIM, beneficent and kind -
He never placed us here below
To waste our days in grief and woe -
He form'd man with a sense for joy -
To gratify that sense shall be my best employ.

(*The Scribbler*, Mar. 1, 1827)

Religion itself was herein made to subserve the predominantly social focus of the period.

As in pre-1815 Lower Canadian verse, in post-1815 verse from the same province nature was not often employed as an emblem of moral or spiritual truth. Lyrical descriptions of nature frequently provided instead the stimuli for reflections or emotional effusions by their authors - reflections and effusions which had to do with man rather than with nature itself or with a spiritual domain:

> The waving forest's wide domain,
> Beyond the lawn, my vision greets.
> There every verdure softly meets,
> The towering pine's deep em'rald stain,
> The willow's light and cheerful green,
> The beach, in yellow foliage drest,
> The poplar's dark and shining vest,
> Its leaves, in every breath that quiver,
> And in the cool air seem to shiver;
> Each bright variety of hue
> There strikes upon th'admiring view.
> Through its dark groves' refreshing shade,
> The wild breeze hollow murmurs made;
> Its bosom heav'd with gentle motion,
> Like the softly troubled ocean;
> Beneath that forest's sombre shade,
> Oft have my vagrant footsteps stray'd,
> Oft have I paus'd, its depths among,
> To breathe a light and artless song;
> Oft paus'd amidst its gloomy haunts,
> Where nature's wildest livery flaunts,
> To leave the sigh that childhood grants,
> When crowd of wishes, undefined,
> Steal in the uninstructed mind.[18]

The sentimental vagueness which closes this passage is illustrative of the direction in which Lower Canadian verse of this time was moving. The view of man as other than a religious being was retained throughout the verse written between 1815 and 1830 but that view became associated more and more with the vestiges of sentimentality which are here apparent and which would become even more pronounced after 1830.

CHAPTER V

VERSE IN UPPER CANADA TO 1830

The composition of verse in Upper Canada was virtually non-existent in the eighteenth century, and continued to be sparse until after the War of 1812. The province itself was not created until 1791, and, although its first periodical, the *Upper Canada Gazette, or American Oracle*, was established by Louis Roy in 1793, that paper published little or no native poetry in its first decade. The lives of the *Canadian Constellation* (1799-1800) and the *Niagara Herald* (1801-1802) were both too brief to contribute significantly to the birth of indigenous verse in the area. The next important weekly to be established in Upper Canada was Stephen Miles'[1] *Kingston Gazette* in 1810. The *Gazette* was the only paper to appear in the province between 1811 and 1815.[2] The two *Gazettes* did produce a small body of verse before 1812, but the real growth occurred after 1815.

The birth of poetry in the province was not delayed by a population deficiency. By 1784 over 6,000 Loyalist refugees had already settled in the area.[3] The population was of sufficient size to stimulate the creation of a new province in 1791, and thousands of land-hungry Americans, who were pretentiously designated "late Loyalists," were lured northward by the land policies of the 1790's and after. By 1812 the province's population had

increased to about 75,000.[4]

Upper Canada was almost entirely a rural community unlike the English-speaking element of Lower Canada which was predominantly urban. Settlement was also more widely diffused over a greater area than in the Maritimes. The few population centres, such as Niagara, York and Kingston, remained small for a long time, and instead of being able to create their own economic and cultural hinterlands, they remained themselves outposts in the Montreal hinterland. This relationship continued to exist, on a cultural level at least, until the cessation of the *Literary Garland* in 1851.

The pioneer of Upper Canada was also initially faced with the task of settling virgin territory, while the English in Quebec and the New Englanders in Nova Scotia came to land which had long been settled by Europeans.

The conditions of settlement in Upper Canada before 1830 were more inimical, then, to the immediate production of *belles-lettres* of any sort, than they had been in the Maritimes and Lower Canada, and the character of the population as well militated against such production. Drawn from Loyalist militia, from the lower ranks of the British military (with a smattering of officers), and from the rough cutting edge of American westward expansion, they for the most part lacked the education, the interest, and the ability to produce literary, as opposed to oral, verse. The measure of literacy required for the production of verse was possessed by a very small proportion of the population, primarily male, and for the most part restricted to clergymen, journalists and government administrators.

Native verse did appear more frequently after 1815, again coincident with the increase in the number of periodicals in which this verse almost invariably appeared. Some poets, such as Adam Hood Burwell,[5] published in the Montreal magazines as well as in the local weeklies. Upper Canada possessed no contemporary equivalents to the *Scribbler*, *Canadian Magazine* and *Canadian Review*. The *Weekly Register* (1822-1825) and the *U. E. Loyalist* (1826-1828), both of which were adjuncts to the *York Gazette*, might be considered at best as proto-literary magazines, but the literary magazine in its proper sense did not appear in Upper Canada until after 1830.

Very few pamphlets or books of poetry were produced by Upper Canada writers before 1830. In August of 1819 the *Niagara Gleaner* carried for several issues an advertisement soliciting subscriptions for the publication of "The Original Poems of ERIUS. By Adam Hood Burwell." The volume was to be about two hundred and fifty pages in length and was to contain a satire entitled "The Gourlayad," but there is no evidence that either volume or poem were ever published. An anonymous pamphlet, *An Address to the Liege Men of Every British Colony and Province in the World*, was printed by the *Kingston Herald* in 1822, but the honour of being the first identified writer in Upper Canada to publish a volume of poetry belongs to James Lynne Alexander[6] whose *Wonders of the West; or, A Day at The Falls of Niagara* was printed at York in 1825. James M. Cawdell's[7] *The Wandering Rhymer* followed in 1826, again from York. The only other two volumes to appear in this period from an Upper Canadian pen were both printed in London, England,

where Major John Richardson,[8] the author of *Tecumseh* (1828) and of *Kensington Gardens in 1830* (1830), had been living for some time.

The amount of native verse produced in Upper Canada prior to 1830 is admittedly small when compared to that of Lower Canada and the Maritimes, but it is still large enough to merit scholarly attention. It is also sufficiently distinct in character from the verse of the other two regions and sufficiently homogenous in its own various productions to warrant consideration as a separate corpus of early Canadian poetry.

In general, the verse of Upper Canada provides a kind of midpoint between the prevailing religiosity of Maritime verse and the predominant social vision of Lower Canadian verse. Religious and moral themes frequently informed Upper Canadian verse, but their treatment was not so intense as in Maritime verse. Upper Canadian poets placed a greater emphasis upon man in society than did their Maritime counterparts, but their social vision was still less pronounced than that of Lower Canadian versifiers. Finally, Upper Canadian verse was distinguished from that of the other two regions by its more frequent use of nature, both as emblem of man and God, and as an occasion for straightforward description.

Upper Canadian verse was also formalistically distinctive. Its most popular mode was the dramatic narrative. Lyric and contemplative verse were also produced. Little didactic verse is apparent, since dramatic was preferred to discursive or declamatory presentation, although a few lines of didactic statement did frequently conclude a poem. A wide variety of rhyme schemes was used in each of these modes,

blank verse being especially popular in narrative, while the rhyming couplet was comparatively unpopular. Various metres and line lengths were utilized.

The models followed by Upper Canada poets were for the most part the ones already noted in the discussions of Lower Canada and the Maritimes. Felicia Hemans was still the predominant influence, with other sentimentalists such as Letitia E. Landon, Mary Ann Browne, Moore and Montgomery also making their collective presence felt. One does find, however, that the provincial periodicals also printed productions of the higher-ranking Romantic poets such as Scott, Southey, Shelley and Wordsworth, thereby making these people accessible to the native writer, although apparently without a significant impact.

The political vision of Upper Canada's verse was more introspective than extroverted. European affairs did not occasion nearly as much discussion as they did in Lower Canadian verse. Cawdell included in his *Wandering Rhymer* (1826) a poem dealing obliquely with Polish patriotism ("To Miss Porter on Reading Her Novel of Thaddeas at Warsaw," pp. 20-21), and the *Gore Gazette* in 1828 printed three poems praising Britain for her aid to the Portugese. The Napoleonic struggles stimulated surprisingly little poetic comment. Almost the only poem written about Napoleonic France was the following, whose elegiac note betrays a fundamental detachment of the author from the event:

> A nation fam'd for ev'ry noble art,
> That warms the breast or dignifies the heart,
> Glowing with ardor in a royal cause,
> The firm supporter of their ancient laws -
> Such *once* was France! Now how alas! defac'd,
> Her laurels blighted and her sons disgrac'd;

Her lawful sovereign, guiltless Louis, slain;
Her noblest blood wide-scatter'd o'er the plain;
Her princes victims of a murd'rous band,
Or exiles wandering in a foreign land -
An upstart despot, with his iron sway;
Tears with relentless hand her sons away;
To add new victims to his brazen chain,
Or once-freed nations to subdue again,
The Muses fly - Religion disappears -
And all the land a gloomy visage wears.
Where now are seen of former France the pride,
The schools of letter'd science spreading wide?
Where now the loyal dictates of the breast,
In former France on ev'ry mind imprest?
Or where those sons of virtue that excell'd
Not less in private life than in the field?
Hush'd now those dictates of the upright mind -
Hush'd or regarded as the empty wind.
Crimes, desolation, ruin, govern all,
The wicked conquer, and the virtuous fall.

This detachment was a matter of attitude and not simply of distance, and was perhaps attributable, in part at least, to the predominantly American origins of the Upper Canadian population. At any rate, this attitude was illustrated by the relative inattention of Upper Canada's versifiers to European affairs.

Britain was also neglected. Poems in praise of the King and of Britain's political leaders were much less frequent than in either of the other two British North American regions. The Duke of Clarence was, in fact, attacked rather bluntly by one provincial penman in the following appropriately limerick-like verse:

A certain great Duke
His mistress forsook,
For an heiress, whose gold was a burden;
But she long'd for a Pole,
And so on the whole,
He was sent back to dip in the Jordan!
(*Weekly Register*, July 24, 1823)

Major John Richardson, whose *Kensington Gardens in 1830* was not nearly

so gross, also directed his attention satirically towards Britain, aiming his barbs primarily at social frivolousness and pretentiousness, but also linking these to a greed for wealth and power which damned Britain's conduct with respect to the Greek struggle for independence. The following lengthy passage illustrates Richardson's successful use of Byronic verse to satirize simultaneously the exhibitionist horsemen of Kensington Gardens and British international conduct:

XII.

Behind this wall, divided by a ditch,
  Large troops of horsemen take their daily stand
Patient and suffering 'neath the sun's hot pitch
  As Turks or Arabs in their native land;
Both old and ugly, handsome, young and rich;
  All linked together like a Theban band
Some leaping down the moat to prove agility;
Others to see their friends and show civility.

XIII.

At first like flying Cossacks they appear
  Following at random in each other's track,
And throwing clouds of dust from front to rear
  As thick as Platoff's lancers in attack;
Then rein their coursers, which are various here
  From the Arabian to the English hack,
And take up what they deem a good position
For showing off their own and steed's condition.

XIV.

Not Ibrahim's squadrons at the fierce assault
  Of Missolonghi - by the way a stain
Of Christian Europe and a moral fault,
  Which all attempt to blot out must be vain -
What follower of Ali from the Balt-
  Ic to the Caspian sea would e'er restrain
His wrath, or coolly see his brethren bleed
Beneath the vengeance of a hostile creed?

XV.

We Christians, though, are inconsistent men,
And ever tumbling headlong in extremes:
Some ages since we sought the Saracen
Beneath his native sun's meridian beams -
And why? Because we would thrust down our ten-
Ets into every throat, while ghastly dreams
Of lust and rapine filled us, and the sword
Alone proclaimed the glory of our Lord!

XVI.

Much blood and treasure in the cause was spent;
But blood and treasure in those days were given
Profusely, and as so much value lent
At interest to be well repaid in heaven -
That of the spiritual kind, of course, is meant;
Though some few might 'tis true be driven
To barter future hopes for present gain,
As certain commissaries did in Spain.

XVII.

But now the case is changed - and blood and gold,
And most especially this, last, are rare:
And men, having learned to think are grown more cold
In matters calling for religious care:
While English statesmen, loth to lose their hold
In politics, would see with easy air
All Greece in crescents and horse tails arrayed
Before they'd yield one atom of their trade.

XVIII.

Not that they care one jot if Greeks or Turks
Should fall, or prove triumphant in the sequal;
'Tis only as the public interest works,
For Greek and Moslem faith to them are equal;
And while their merchants barter goods for dirks
With Hadi Soloman or Hadu Mekel,
And bring a certain revenue to the crown,
Both Turks and Christians may, in turn go down.
(*Kengington Gardens*, pp. 9-12)

British statesmen did not generally enjoy the approbation of Upper Canadian versifiers, but the following encomium to Lord Collingwood

indicates that such men were not wholly without favour:

> If e'er compassion touch'd a British heart,
> Or pity claim'd in others was a part -
> If honest worth e'er wak'd the gen'rous sigh,
> Or grateful tears bedew'd an English eye -
> Now Britons bid fresh streams of sorrow flow,
> For brave illustrious Collingwood laid low.
>
> . . .
>
> Warriors and heroes - ye whom fame inspires!
> Ye whom the genius of your country fires!
> Ye who are taught to conquer or to die,
> *Lords of the Lion heart and Eagle eye,*
> Hear and improve - be Collingwood your guide,
> He fought for England and for England died.
> (*Kingston Gazette*, Oct. 9, 1810)

Collingwood was obviously being praised for his martial prowess. The British soldier was an heroic figure in the Upper Canadian poetic vision, as the following passage from Alexander's *Wonders of the West* clearly shows:

> XXII.
>
> What is a British soldier? One
> Who from a foe disdains to run;
> Who, fearless 'mid the battle's roar,
> Is gentle when the battle's o'er;
> Who never insults a vanquish'd foe,
> However high, however low;
> Whose motto, over all the world,
> Wher'er the British flag's unfurl'd,
> "*Humane & Valiant*" stands confess'd,
> Brightly emblazon'd on his crest,
> Shall such a being have his post,
> Amid a wild and lawless host,
> Whose fell resentment nought can balk,
> While foe remains and tomahawk?
> And shall some future Brock be doom'd
> With such compeers to be entomb'd?
> (p. 16)

Upper Canadians had cause to regard the British soldier favourably. Some inhabitants of the province, like Richardson, had army careers. Many had been British soldiers, or their fathers had been:

the Niagara frontier and the St. Lawrence River shore from Kingston to Montreal had a large number of retired British soldiers and disbanded Loyalist militia among their settlers. British regulars, while not all that numerous, had been essential to the preservation of Upper Canada during the War of 1812.

The 1812 to 1814 conflict did prompt poetic comment and some of it was directed outward against the United States. The verse of Upper Canada, however, contained a smaller volume of anti-Americanism than had the verse of Lower Canada or of the Maritimes, and its expression of the sentiment was also less virulent. Attacks upon the southern aggressor were frequently oblique:

> The tempest spreads - the lengthning gleams,
> Its livid fire o'er Ocean streams;
> And as it hither darts its beams,
> It glares with ruin terrible.
>
> Columbia, whose rising star,
> Shone fairly 'mid surrounding war,
> And cheer'd her leagued States afar,
> Now arms with bitter enmity.
>
> The sword, that in her hour of dawn,
> To aid a nobler cause was drawn,
> With fatal zeal is now girt on
> To prop the throne of tyranny.
>
> And dare she think that proud success,
> Her rash unhallow'd arms will bless;
> When fiercely her banditti press,
> To fight 'gainst heav'n and liberty.
>
> No! the bold Lion slept before,
> But now he threatens at her shore,
> He then restrain'd his dreadful roar,
> Now speaks in thunder deathfully.
>
> Secure in Britain's vital part;
> So here the foe first aims his dart,
> Hither he looks with wishful heart,
> Here points the mouth'd artillery.

Tho' thin our ranks, and small our band,
The God of Armies nerves our hand,
And though their legions fill the strand,
Our cry may yet be VICTORY!
(*Kingston Gazette*, July 12, 1812)

Again, the elegaic mood deflects the critical thrust, and might also be indicative here of a fundamental feeling of kinship to the United States. A similar sentiment probably underlay John Richardson's simultaneous praise of both the British commander, Barclay, and the American commander, Perry, when describing their Lake Erie battle in the opening canto of his poem, *Tecumseh*, as well as in his preface to that work.

Upper Canada's distinctive attitude towards the United States was also revealed by the people's general conduct during the war, and is undoubtedly attributable to their origins. A significant portion of the populace did not take up arms against the American invaders; the record of the provincial militia was almost as bad as that of their American counterparts. "The people" were not eager to fight one another. The Loyalist antagonism to republicanism did not pervade Upper Canada, because the Loyalists - that is, those directly and immediately exiled by the Revolution - were a minority. The largest segment of the population consisted of Americans drawn northward by the lure of cheap land in Canada and the threat of Indian troubles which darkened their own frontiers. Politics had never provided these people with their prime motivation, and they consequently did not produce much political poetry at this time.

Upper Canada was greatly relieved when the struggle, which must

have seemed to many of its inhabitants an intra-family dispute was ended. They were very eager to establish, not simply a passive co-existence, but a warm and positive interchange with the southern neighbour. The desire was exemplified by Marshall Spring Bidwell[9] in the following poem:

> Too long the battle's noise,
> And garments roll'd in blood,
> Have sadden'd all our joys,
> And sicken'd every good:
> Now brighter scenes shall swell our hearts,
> The milder virtues reign,
> Fair science and the liberal arts,
> Shall now revive again.
>
> . . .
>
> Long sever'd friends now meet;
> Now exiles cease to roam:
> Exulting prisoners greet,
> Their kindred and their home.
> To distant lands, on every tide,
> Shall commerce spread her stores,
> And seas and lakes no more divide,
> But now unite their shores.
>
> . . .
>
> To ploughshares beat your swords,
> To pruning hooks, your spears;
> No angry looks or words,
> No more of groans and tears.
> Since Prince and President at last,
> Their hands in treaty join,
> Let's throw a veil o'er injuries past,
> And drown them all in wine.
> (*Kingston Gazette*, Mar. 25, 1815)

The patriotic muse was exercised, nevertheless, during the War of 1812, and in at least one poem is was exercised at the expense of the United States. A writer celebrating Brock's conquest at Detroit of a much larger force under Hull castigated the Americans for treachery, hypocrisy, and cowardice:

When our Nelsons and Moores, great props of the nation,
And by death Abercrombies were swept from their station,
The foe sung a ditty with much exultation,
And thought to get clear of their pale consternation.

How foolish the hope, new heroës were riding,
To check in its budding their dastard rejoicing,
See Well'sley victorious, for new laurels glowing,
And near him behold gen'rous Grame of Balgowa.

Ah, Ah, cry the Fredish these facts may be true,
But here with more cunning our aims we pursue,
We flatter, we swagger, we fawn, cog, and lie,
And tho' stealing ourselves, we raise the first cry.

While their Heroes at home are opposing the French,
We'll hasten the Canadas from them to wrench;
No troops have they ready our progress to stop,
And their Chiefs are perhaps of a different crop.

Thus sans provocation to plunder John Bull
Wise Madison orders redoubtable Hull,
This measure he thinks will give Britain a shock,
But in planning he makes no allowance for BROCK.

This little mistake in his first calculation
Soon turns to destruction the wicked invasion;
For the British assembling made Hull homeward scamper,
Who saw they were likely to give him a damper.

The Fredish are filled with most gloomy emotion
To fight for Detroit they lose every notion;
But each to his neighbour would whisper and croak,
How shall we escape from this terrible BROCK.

They hoist the White Flag with trembling forbodings;
For former demerits produce sad corrodings;
They yield, and our Chief gives immediate direction
Their effects and their persons to hold in protection.

(*Upper Canada Gazette*, Oct. 17, 1812)

This is the most explicit attack on the United States extant from the verse of Upper Canada during this period. A few years later, in fact, Adam Hood Burwell in a poem about the battle of Lundy's Lane removed the minimal reference to the opposing sides which he had originally included in his poem:

To glory rush, ye brave, rush on! -
Seize, seize the laurel! Lo 'tis war! -
Columbia yields! - the work is done! -
Britannia shouts the victory!
(*Montreal Gazette*, Feb. 2, 1820;
quoted from the *Niagara Gleaner*)

He laced these references with general designations, thereby blunting even this mild imprecation against the United States:

To glory rush, ye brave, rush on!
Seize, seize the laurel! lo! 'tis won
The vanquish'd yield - the work is done
Huzza! the shout is victory.
(*The Scribbler*, Jan. 24, 1822, I, 245-246)

One cannot be sure why Burwell made this particular alteration, but he was living in an area largely inhabited by late Loyalists and his own family had emigrated from the United States, albeit among the first wave of Loyalist migration.

Most of the patriotic poetry composed in Upper Canada as a result of the War of 1812 centred upon the figure of Brock. His death at Queenston Heights elicited an immediate response. The following lament was printed in the same issue of *Upper Canada Gazette* as the poem on his Detroit victory and was probably from the same hand:

Why stern usurper with insatiate jaws -
Seize on the Chief his Country ill could spare
The great Defender of our righteous cause,
His country's weal his first, his lasting care!

The first of glories still the Warrior fir'd;
His breast heroic e'er estrang'd from fear,
First in the battles ranks he e'er aspir'd,
His gen'rous bosom view'd no danger near!

O'er fields of carnage long the Hero strode,
Nor sought a fame but such as virtue yields!
Tears cease to flow, now like a Demigod
He moves majestic o'er Elysian fields!

His Heaven a while to grateful Britons lent
And bids but now her trophied Loan retire,
Whilst round the Hero in his stead now sent -
Will beam alike heroic glowing fire.

Both of these poems glorify Brock as a British hero as does a still later effort by Burwell published in the January 1, 1824 issue of the *Weekly Register*,[10] but Burwell's poem does possess some sense of provincial particularity. It depicts a conversation between a feminine Queenston Heights and an etherial "Genius of Canada" and closes with a Canadian focus:

E'en now are my faithful Canadians preparing
The pile of affection to rear to his name.
The marble shall tell of his deeds to the stranger,
And ages unborn shall recount all his fame.

In an earlier and less extravagant poem, Burwell presented the person and achievement of Brock primarily within the provincial framework:

Ye that boast a Patriotic name,
Ye that feel a Patriotic flame
Ardent in young bosom glow,
Thro' your veins, high-mounting, flow;
You that rais'd a helping hand,
To protect your native land,
When invasion, stalking round,
Half our country captive bound;
Tell me, Patriots, for you know,
What should gratitude bestow,
What award the noble brave,
Who from threefold dangers saved,
Saved the land when hope had fled,
And desponding hung her head?
You who, deep with wisdom fraught,
Harsh discordant matter wrought -
Moulded from the seeds of strife,
Form and order, union, life:
You, whose Legislative sway,
In the dark and trying day,
Gave the arm of power its force,
Turn'd it to its proper course;

Dar'd to immolate a part,
To preserve the vital heart:
Tell me, Statesmen, for you know,
What should gratitude bestow,
What reward the wise and good,
Who the raging storm withstood,
Nobly braved it 'till the last,
'Till the danger all was past?
Patriots, Statesmen, all you crave,
Is your Country's love - to have;
Affection's fond effusions tell,
That you deserve its praises well.
Wake, O wake the trembling wire,
O'er it breathe ecstatic fire!
Strike the deep-ton'd chords that tell
The deeds of those who fought and fell!
Crown each ever honour'd name,
With the laurell'd wreaths of fame.
Foremost in the glorious band,
Best and greatest, BROCK shall stand,
Followed by a patriot train,
Who have dy'd the embattled plain.
They stood firm in freedom's cause,
To their country and its laws;
They have left their names in trust,
And their country must be just.
(*Upper Canada Gazette*, Mar. 12, 1818)

Burwell's terms of presentation accurately reflect the province's lack of purpose and cohesion during the conflict, drawbacks which Brock had to face and which he managed to overcome in some measure, although he has appeared a more successful figure of "Canadian" unity since his death.

The composition of James Martin Cawdell's "The Canadian Patriot's Hymn" preceded the Canadian-American clash,[11] but was not premonitory of it. Cawdell boasted of provincial martial ardour and his claims were not subsequently borne out in action, but his poem is interesting for its early definition of "Canadian" patriotism. While he distinguished Canada from Britain, geographically, and in some small, implicit way,

culturally as well, Cawdell obviously equated Canadian with British patriotism:

> Should e'er fierce Wars red torrents flow,
> And tinge with blood our fertile plains,
> With joy Canadian hearts would glow
> That dauntless still would be our swains:
> Our sires should view with noble pride,
> Their acquiring Wreaths of Glory,
> Heroes in Victory's arms who died,
> But who would live - would live in story,
> Canadians e'er our Hymn shall be,
> Our King, our country and our Liberty.
>
> And long may each Canadian feel
> In freedom's cause his heart beat high,
> For Home and for our Sovereign's weal,
> In glory's crimson field to die,
> And sure some Maid will shed the tear,
> Some much lov'd Fair with Sorrow bending
> O'er her lamented Warrior's bier,
> Who died herself and King defending,
> Yes, Warrior yes our Hymn shall ever be,
> Our country, King, dear Love and Liberty.
>
> (*York Gazette*, Dec. 12, 1810)

In contrast, the following fragment composed almost two decades later indicated that it was now possible to make a stronger differentiation between mother country and colony, and to begin to regard Canada as an incipiently autonomous unit:

> Old England proudly claims the rose;
> See leeks in Cambria rising;
> The fearless thistle, Scotia shows;
> The Shamrock's dear to Erin.
>
> In Canada, an emblem fine,
> By nature freely given -
> Come let us join and toast the pine,
> And bless the land we live in.
>
> (*Brockville Gazette*, Feb. 27, 1829)

After the War of 1812, the political focus of Upper Canada's verse writers centred upon matters closer to home. The struggle for

political power between radicals and the conservative ruling oligarchy known as the Family Compact very soon began to be enacted and recorded in the verse of the province. The radicals found their poetic voice early with the founding in 1825 of William Lyon MacKenzie's *Colonial Advocate*, whose pages from the beginning carried radical verse. This verse most often took the form of bitter, satirical invective, having clearly particular and personal targets, and using for material actual events which are referred to, not obliquely, but directly. People were named, or their identities were so obvious that they required no formal designation. The satire, in other words, was completely topical, as in the following verse:

> Ye placemen Colonial, come round in a throng,
> And join in the chorus to this loyal song;
> Ye churchmen established come dance round the steeple,
> And laugh into scorn the complaints of the people.
> Your fears are relieved
> And England's deceived;
> The truth is still hidden and you are believed;
> What care you for Canada factions and wroth,
> While you govern one country, and plunder them both.
>
> A fig for their press and their central committee,
> We may now press and squeeze without mercy or pity;
> If they murmur or whine, why the laws shall *confound them*,
> And Judges *condemn them*, and prisons *surround them*.
> The cag'd Freemen may prate
> On matters of state;
> And *Carey* will only OBSERVE thro' his grate;
> MacKenzie shall shiver with cold and with dread,
> And beg like the Freemen for fuel and bread.
> The news was so good we could scarce give it credit,
> But now it is certain, the great Duke *has said it;*
> Their fine British Freedom is all but a flam
> And their famed constitution is not worth a _____:
> "They forget," says the duke,
> "That they live in a nook -
> Of our great British Empire, and so they mistook
> When they said British subjects who live on frontiers
> Can claim British Freedom and keep on their ears."

The judge that they lov'd we have sent o'er the ocean,
And the *hate* of the people has got us promotion;
Tho' few are our numbers, their threats we despise
While we keep our strong hold of corruption and lies,
The Brend is still FREE
To our own family;
And rulers of Canada thus we will be:
We'll Colonels and Justices make all our minions
And laugh at Sir John's and the people's opinions.

How each spark of honesty quickly we'll quench
When we play *our law engine* from off our new Bench:
In vain their sedition shall radicals hide
We have pimps who'll betray them e'en *at the fireside;*
Who never will shrink
From infamy's brink,
But mix falsehood with truth till they make the truth
stink:
Who will soothe their poor victims, and quiet their
fears,
And o'er those they have ruin'd shed crocodile tears.

Poor slavish Canadians their hopes are all gone,
Or they are worse than in vain, for *they hope in Sir John!*
Let us fill up our pockets however they frown,
Now WILLIS is banished and ROLPH is put down.
Sir John we forbode
Will go the same road,
Or be driven like an OX, with yoke and a goad;
Then *down with the people,* poor querolous elves,
And deuce take the country! - HURRAH FOR OUR SELVES!!
(*Colonial Advocate,* July 26, 1829)

The characters in this drama are: Thomas Cary, conservative Montreal publisher; William Lyon MacKenzie, reformer and possible composer of this poem; Judge John W. Willis, removed from office by the Family Compact; the Duke of Richmond, British government leader; John Rolph, reformer from Western Ontario; Sir John Colborne, recently appointed Lieutenant-Governor of Upper Canada; and finally, the Family Compact as composite narrator. The satire is partially directed against Britain, but is more emphatically aimed at the Family Compact whom the reformer believed, not wholly without justice, to be hoodwinking the

British government. Issues here, as in most of the verse written during this conflict produced by either side, are lost in the welter of personalities. The affair, at least as recorded by the early political verse, was not abstract and philosophical but concrete and personal, not a matter of thought but a concern with action.

The anti-reform verse, which seems to have outnumbered the reform poetry, primarily because the latter was largely restricted to the few radical periodicals in the province, was equally specific. Adam Hood Burwell wrote, or at least intended to write, a lengthy poem attacking the agitator, Robert Gourlay. The following poem castigates several specific radicals, labelling them, with some measure of accuracy, Yankee, and republican. Anti-Americanism in Upper Canada received more stimulation from this internal conflict than it had from the actual fight with the United States:

> "We're out," the unpitied Rolphites cry,
> "We're out," the Bidwells sad reply;
> Canada's lost without us.
> BOLTON, and his presumptuous band;
> In room of all the *Yankees* stand,
> From place and pension scout us.
>
> Dear ROLPH, once greatest of the great,
> Thou sage reformers of the state,
> Thy case demands compassion;
> Thy red hot zeal for "Yankee Church,"
> Has left thee sadly in the lurch,
> *A Patriot out of fashion.*
>
> . . . .
>
> No more thy speech with praise overflows,
> Of King and Country's deadly foes,
> And *Yankee* toleration;
> Of all the "States" which Heav'n protects,
> And but the CHURCH, all kinds of sects,
> Patterns of moderation.
>
> . . . .

Perhaps some future day had seen,
You quite divested of your spleen,
Without a thought of ascendence;
While you secured some "Clergy lands,"
Petitions in our begging hands,
And forced to dance attendance.

Should we in turn then humbly sue,
That share of influence from you,
Which was so lightly granted,
I'm much afraid you'd ne'er afford,
One scrap of power from off your board,
Till principle's recanted.

Then cease dear ROLPH, in vain you seek,
What we're possessed of, that we'll keep,
To us the land was given,
Doom'd to perdition from our birth,
'Tis fair that we should rule on earth,
As we're shut out from Heaven.
(*Brockville Gazette*, Dec. 7, 1830)

This last poem reveals the degree of heated animosity already involved in the reform-Compact struggle especially over the issue of Clergy Reserves, but the criticism was not always so violent. A few examples of gentler and more general disapprobation can be found, especially from an earlier period. The tone is not as bitter but the major themes are the same:

Let hist'ry's page your caution guide,
To steer the bark with even tide.
Your ardour check, be slow to try,
Strange Utopias to descry.
Inexperience is a rocky shore,
New maxims dang'rous to explore
Passions inflam'd hard to control,
And nature oft combustible.
O! thou be firm, rash change resist,
Success scarce ever pays the risk.
(*Niagara Gleaner*, Oct. 30, 1824)

This struggle continued throughout the thirties, of course, and finally culminated in the Rebellion of 1837. Upper Canada's verse continued to record the struggle, as well as the self-congratulation

of the nominal victors.

Beyond its political dimensions, the society of Upper Canada was delineated sparely by its verse writers. There was little occasional verse, and in general this was informed by a sobriety similar to that which pervaded early Maritime poetry. Occasionally, however, a glimmer of the comic is evident. One example of this has already been noted in Richardson's satire, *Kensington Gardens in 1830*, which, although it was concerned with the nature of society, looked at London rather than at Canada. Cawdell brought the comic muse into a Canadian setting in his "Trip to the Falls of Niagara" (*The Wandering Rhymer*, pp. 10-11) which depicts a humorous outing of dubious moral character. His "Rhymer," however, is a recently arrived British tourist who regards the Canadian scene with a somewhat supercilious eye, and who consequently undercuts the humour slightly.

There is no such strain in "The Beauties of Dundas":

> Along the streets, how sweet to stray,
> Through low and boggy, muddy way,
> To hear the bull frogs' merry roar,
> And hear her sing whom I adore.
> Dundas is a pretty place,
> The swamps, they smell so sweetly'
> Trees so tall, and flowers so gay,
> They make it look completely.
>
> How sweet to poke one's nose among
> The marshy pools, that smell so strong;
> Along Desjardins' famed canal;
> (If *he* does not get praise, who shall?)
> Dundas is a pretty place,
> (The men, though rather wildish;)
> Fathers kind - husbands - O blind;
> The women sometimes - childish.

'Tis sweeter still to see the ladies,
They're so divinely fair. Their trade is
To patch their gowns and mend their hose,
And make their wedding sheets and clothes.
    Dundas is a pretty place -
    The lasses, O, the lasses!
    Their pretty faces covered o'er,
    With veils as green as grass is.

Along the streets, how sweet to stray,
Thou low and boggy, muddy way;
To hear the bull-frogs merry roar,
And hear her sing whom I adore.
    Dundas is a pretty place,
    Such bread and cheese, and butter;
    And wedding-sheets, dear, dear me,
    My heart's all in a flutter.
(*Niagara Gleaner*, Nov. 13, 1824)

The comic tone here is light because the narrator was in sympathy with the scene and the people whom he described. The humour has arisen directly out of the particular social landscape which is shown to be interdependently fused with the physical landscape, an inescapable fact of pioneer life.

The statement and mood of the next poem also reflect, though less emphatically, the conditions of pioneer society. The comic potential of this writer's material and vocabulary is ultimately negated by his poorly constructed, semi-moralistic conclusion. In opting for relative sobriety, however, he adopted a poetic treatment of social matter typical of his time and provincial culture:

Abode of selfish welcome, Hail!
Thy full fed comforts ne'er shall fail
While purse or credit either last so stout:
Thou wanderer's home,
Resource of those who onward roam,
Till power or inclination, lo! are out.

I own I owe thee much, most gentle Inn.
Nor thy fair fame would e'er I witless hurt,

Lest, feeling wroth, thou leave my unhous'd skin
To roll with pigs and beggars in the dirt.

Yet listen, tavern, to my just complaint,
Amid thy jungle deign an ear to lend,
With wearied yawn, or execration faint,
Think, pitying think, how oft my jaws distend.

How oft thy parlor's little length I trace,
How oft I pause each picture to admire,
Then, satiate thus, avert my rueful face,
And pensive turn my backside to the fire.

I tune perchance my voice, and droning hum
The ecstatic airs of Braham, Shield, or Kelly;
'Tis all in vain; on thee I therefore fall,
And strictly charge thee! ere again I call
Provide relief for mind as well as body.
(*Kingston Gazette*, Dec. 18, 1810)

Two social issues of greater importance were treated by Upper Canada's versifiers in a suitably moralistic and didactic fashion. The first and more popular of these was the temperance movement which grew in poetic and social importance after 1830, but in 1827 and 1828 the *Gore Gazette* printed several temperance poems and in 1828 the *Niagara Herald* also joined the cause. These were discursive and declamatory doggerel in a typical temperance manner, and so will not be reproduced here. The dramatic narrative which would later become a salient feature of temperance verse was not employed by Upper Canada writers.

The second issue was that of slavery and this received at least one notable early expression in a poem of moderate length entitled "The Negro's Soliloquy," written by the thematically ubiquitous Burwell. The poem is an impassioned monologue which depicts the slave as equal in intellect and emotion to any enslaving Christian, and as perhaps superior to the latter in truly human sympathies. The Negro is a man

who deeply feels and religiously treasures romantic love and filial attachments.

O lovely country! where my father dwelt,
How recollection paints to me thy charms!
Where all that happiness could give I felt -
Where oft I clasp't my Zilla in my arms!

O cruel tyrants! as a Christian loves,
I loved my Zilla - with affection strong;
Like you I glow'd when nature warm'd my breast,
Or pleased, I listen'd to her artless song.

I too had babes - I as a father felt,
When, prattling round, they hung upon my knee -
Should not I love them with a father's love? -
O cruel christian, I appeal to thee.

Strong as the day I enter'd Zilla's bower,
For Zilla dear my faithful love remains;
Though now, like me, my Zilla and her babes
May toil in bondage, or may groan in chains.

Oft as I witness those whom love has blest,
In sweet enjoyment by each other's side,
My tortured heart shrinks in my dying breast;
Remembrance calls to mind my own loved bride.

My bride, my babes! - these dearest - but not there
The ties of nature or affection end:
And aged mother, and a hoary sire,
Were mine, with brother, sisters, and a friend.

O sad remembrance! that so oft has stung
My bleeding heart for joys that once were mine!
Why kill me not, and snatch me from my woes?
Why leave me still in misery to pine?
(*The Poems...*, p. 50)

In violating these bonds, hypocritical Christians have deserved the divine vengeance invoked against them in the last verse, in the utterance of which sentiments narrator and poet coalesce into one voice:

Great God of justice arise! Avenge our cause!
Remember Afric's injured, wretched, race!
Let those unholy rebels to thy laws
Redress our wrongs, and wipe off our disgrace!
(*The Poems...*, p. 51)

Love was Burwell's criterion for asserting the humanity of his Negro: the latter could experience strongly and faithfully romantic, marital, and familial affections. Love gave stature and meaning to his existence. This was one of the fundamental powers ascribed to the emotion by the poets of Upper Canada who wrote a great deal about it.

Burwell used love to affirm the nobility of one group of people whose humanity was customarily ignored in his day, even by many who were active against slavery. One of Burwell's colleagues employed the same criterion to proclaim the nobility of another group of people who were similarly denigrated. A certain "Linus" composed a narrative of a tragic Indian love affair in which parental interference resulted in the separate but almost simultaneous suicides of the two lovers. The poet ended with an immersion in gore and sentiment in the following exhortation:

> And let the tale remember'd be,
> Which strongly for the Indian pleads,
> A noble nature, wild and free,
> And capable of noble deeds.
> (*Niagara Gleaner*, July 26, 1823)

Love served rather specialized immediate interests in these two poems but its central significance to the dramatic and thematic structure of each work implies an equally central significance in the general scheme of things. That love gives meaning to life is the underlying theme and this theme is also the basic assumption of a good many courtship poems. The following quotation declaring this theme explicitly is the final verse of a poem which begins by listing the poet's many affections for nature and life and which concludes by subjugating these to his love for Laura:

Yet, without, *One*, these loves were vain;
This world, a barrier waste would seem;
Its riches want, its pleasure pain;
And lengthen'd life, a weary dream:
LAURA.
(*Weekly Register*, Sept. 19, 1822)

This emphasis on the place and power of human love was not generally regarded as a potential threat to the primacy of divine love, but at least one writer worried sufficiently about the incursions of Cupid into the realm of God to utter the following admonition:

. . . what should be the soul's delight,
Upon a solemn Sabbath night?
Must women fill affection's throne,
Where *Deity*, should reign alone?
No: *Men*, and *Maids*, who partners seek,
Do all your wooing through the week,
That you may joyfully afford
The Sabbath to the Sabbath's Lord. . . .
(*Niagara Gleaner*, July 19, 1823)

More mundane powers were also asserted to be the property of Cupid. He could cure homesickness, alleviate the feeling of exile, powers of some significance in a society of immigrants. Witness the following encomium to "The Welland Beauty":

I.

When first Canadia's plains I view'd,
My heart heav'd high with sorrow;
With pain I view'd, the landscape rude,
And fear'd to see the morrow:
For I was strange, and young, and poor;
Just freed from filial duty;
I knew no more, a shelt'ring door,
I knew no Welland Beauty.

II.

Five painful months roll'd slowly on;
In sickness, toil and trouble:
With features wan, this was my song,

Oh man! thy joy's a bubble; -
No interchange of heart and soul,
Then cheer'd me to my duty,
No friends condole, grief's sweet controul,
Was mine, oh! Welland Beauty.

III.

When those long months had darkling pass'd,
Fate to the Welland brought me, -
That hope was pass'd, and misery fast,
Some demon would have taught me, -
Well, well, said I, then be it so,
I'll closely stick to duty:
I little thought that joy could flow,
From any Welland Beauty.

IV.

This stream, like virtue, free from roar,
Accorded with my sadness;
Till Mary's lore, upon the shore,
Sunk all my grief in sadness. -
She had an eye, so sweet and kind,
A heart, all bound in duty,
She sooth'd so kind, each pain of mind,
She was the Welland Beauty.

V.

I trembling said, all else I'll leave,
For thee, my Scottish lassie. -
Says she, my softest sighs shall heave,
For thee, my English laddie. -
Enraptur'd then, I clasp'd my hand,
And said, O done, my duty;
Here with this hand, my heart command,
Tis thine, my Welland Beauty.
(*Niagara Gleaner*, Jan. 8, 1825)

This poem claims at least as much for the power of woman as it does for the power of love. In fact, the two are inseparable and any culture which assigns a positive role for the one inevitably ascribes a like role to the other. Woman, therefore, had an important place in the poetic vision of Upper Canada, but the culture was after all a male

dominated culture, and whether the particular writer was male or female, woman's role was depicted as adjunctive to man's. She was object or stimulator of male affection but second in importance to him in either case. It is in this light that the following praise of woman by James Lynne Alexander must be regarded:

> "The proper study of mankind is man,"
> So sang the bard of Twickenham.
> Of all the objects in creation,
> There's none deserves our admiration,
> More than the *human form divine,*
> But chief - the form of womankind.
> Thro' whatsoever climes we roam
> In peace, in war, abroad, at home;
> In polish'd city, where the mind,
> By education most refin'd,
> Gives to the fair superior grace,
> Improves each feature of the face;
> Or traverse the unpolish'd wild,
> Where man exists rude nature's child;
> No form so beautiful appears,
> As that which lovely woman wears.
> The sweetest music we can hear,
> Is less delightful to the ear
> Than woman's voice, nor can impart
> Such sweet emotion to the heart.
> The gayest object we can see,
> Cannot assuage our misery,
> Or teach us sorrow to beguile,
> So soon as charming woman's smile.
> (*Wonders of the West,* pp. 23-24)

Alexander's attention was focused upon the physical beauties of woman and their positive emotional effects upon man, and he went on to claim that these blessings were just as attainable in the Canadian province as they were in the Old World:

> And no mean samples of the sex,
> Are seen at these famed cataracts.
> He, who from Europe's polish'd courts,
> To this attractive spot resorts,
> Is forc'd to own his native fair,
> Whom he had deem'd beyond compare,

Are rivall'd, or perhaps, excell'd
In this remote *Canadian* wild,
By the fair daughters of the *west;*
(*Ibid.*, p. 24)

Adam Hood Burwell, meanwhile, in a poem entitled "Woman," presents the subject in a more exalted, and also more sentimental light. Woman is to him a gift from God and functions as a moral figure in man's life, a solace in a fallen, care-worn world, a constant ministering source of kindness, and a means of securing a relative measure of immortality in the finite world:

O lovely woman, fairest flower that springs,
In sweetest robes, from the Creator's hand;
Bestow'd on man to be his constant friend,
His joys, his pains, his pleasures, to command.

. . .

Man is oppress'd; solicitude and care
Weigh down his soul; but when he flies to thee,
Thy soothing words beguile his anxious heart,
And from their burthen set his spirits free.

. . . .

By thee his name descends to future times;
He sees himself, though bowed by length of years,
Live in his children, through life's morn again,
And in their praises, his own praise he hears.

. . .

And yet we see thee mark'd by treacherous man
Fit game for lawless passion. Innocence
Protects thee not against thy wily foe.
The weak find in it but a poor defence.

. . . .

While he, *the spoiler*, is allow'd to pass,
Unmark'd by censure, and secure from shame,
In the broad world to seek and sacrifice
Some other victim to his guilty flame.

O injured woman! I will love thee still,
For where a friend so faithful can I find?
Woman supports us through life's every ill,
A WOMAN bore the SAVIOUR of mankind.
(*The Poems...*, pp. 223-224)

Burwell also castigated those men who fail to treat their divine gift with the propriety and reverence that it deserves, but he did not elevate woman above her customary role of servitor.

Despite these exalted sentiments, it is an undeniable fact, however platitudinous, that the course of love does not always run smoothly, and when it does not, Burwell notwithstanding, the poets of Upper Canada were quick to fix the blame upon woman. Sad, disillusioned, scorned lovers were frequent figures in the verse of the province and they were almost without exception male, victims of some cold or unfaithful female. Again, Burwell was the exception in a poem such as "Cora to Edmund," where the male is the unfaithful deceiver (*The Poems...*, p. 30), but he participated more fully in the conventional (in Upper Canada) role in his poem "The Rejected Lover." This was, still, a comparatively mild presentation of the haughty, unsympathetic female:

> Say Celia, must I then repine
> Beneath the powerful charm of love?
> Can't all these prayers and vows of mine,
> Thy stony bosom move?
>
> Long did my passion lie conceal'd,
> And long I curb'd the rising flame;
> Long was it e'er my tongue reveal'd
> To Celia dear the same.
>
> But when I told her that my heart
> Was firmly bound in Cupid's Chain;
> And that 'twas only her dear self
> Could ease me of my pain;
>
> She bade me from her presence fly;
> My tender tale she would not hear;
> I bade her quietly good bye
> And felt my conscience clear.
>
> (*Ibid.*, p. 29)

A more extreme and more characteristic statement of anti-feminism is exemplified by the following, which denounces woman as morally weak and reprehensible, a being motivated by sexual selfishness and characterized by folly, cunning, hypocrisy and an absence of feeling:

Away, away, you're all the same,
  A flattering, smiling, jilting throng!
Oh! by my soul, I burn with shame,
  To think I've been your slave so long!

Slow to be warn'd, and quick to rove,
  From folly kind, from cunning loath,
Too cold for bliss, too weak for love,
  Yet feigning all that's best in both.

Still panting o'er a crowd to reign,
  More joy it gives to woman's breast
To make ten frigid coxcombs vain,
  Than one true manly lover blest!

Away, away - your smile's a curse -
  Oh! blot me from the race of men,
Kind pitying heaven! by death or worse,
  Before I love such things again!
(*Kingston Gazette*, July 16, 1811)

A natural concomitant of the revulsion from woman depicted here would be "bachelor" poetry, praising the advantages of an unattached and unencumbered existence. Such poems were not nearly so numerous in the canon of Upper Canada as they were in that of Lower Canada, but a few examples can be found. The following is the most complete and most emphatic:

Funny and free are a Bachelor's revelries,
  Cheerily, merrily, passes his life;
Nothing knows he of connubial develries,
  Troublesome children and clamorous wife.
Free from satiety, care, and anxiety,
  Charms in variety fall to his share;

Bacchus's blisses, Venus's kisses,
This, boys, this is the Bachelor's Fare.
A wife, like a canister, chattering, clattering,
Tied to a dog for his torment and dread,
All bespattering, bumping, and battering,
Hurries and worries him till he is dead;
Old ones are two devils haunted with blue devils,
Young ones are new devils raising despair,
Doctors and nurses combining their curses,
Adieu to full purses and Bachelor's Fare.
Through such folly, days, once sweet holidays,
Soon are embitter'd by wrangling and strife;
Wives turn jolly days to melancholy days,
All perplexing and vexing one's life;
Children are rioters, maid servants fly at us,
Mammy to quiet us growls like a bear;
Polly is squalling, and Molly is bawling,
While Dad is recalling his Bachelor Fare.
When they are older grown, then they are bolder grown,
Turning your temper and spurning your rule;
Girls through foolishness, passion, or mulishness,
Party your wishes, and marry a fool.
Boys will anticipate, lavish, and dissipate,
All that your busy pate hoarded with care;
Then tell me what jollity, fun, and frivolity,
Equals in quality Bachelor's Fare.
(*Upper Canada Gazette*, Jan. 8, 1824).

In emphasizing the "deficiencies" of bachelorhood rather than its intrinsic advantages, the poet attacked marriage more than he praised bachelorhood, though of course the attack and the praise cannot be completely separated.

Despite the potentially bitter undertones, which are muted by the lilting verse rhythm, the tone of this poem is primarily comic. A comic treatment of love was not a commonplace for the essentially sentimental muse of Upper Canada, but again there were a few exceptions. The following fragment has some mild fun with courtship and the quality of female affection:

A light step in a giddy dance,
With now and then an Am'rous glance,

A soft squeeze of the hand or two,
A sigh, (a mimic one will do,)
And "What a lovely girl thou art,"
Hurl'd pell mell at a lady's heart,
Will force it in despite of fate
In three days to capitualte.
(*Weekly Register*, Feb. 20, 1813)

The satiric intent of the next poem was a little stronger as its writer mocked the conventional hyperbole of courtship and humorously branded it "Lying":

I do confess, in many a sigh,
My lips have breath'd you many a lie;
And who with such delights in view
Would lose them for a lie or two?
Nay look not thus with brow reproving;
Lies are, my dear, the soul of loving!
If half we tell the girls were true
If half we swear to, think and do
Were aught but lying's bright illusion,
The world would be in strange confusion!
If ladies' eyes were, every one
As lovers swear, a radiant sun,
Astronomy should leave the skies
To learn her lore in ladies' eyes!
Oh no! believe me, lovely girl,
When nature turns your teeth to pearl,
Your neck to snow, your eyes to fire,
Your yellow locks to golden wire,
Then, only then, can heaven decree
That you should live for only me,
Or I for you, as night and morn,
We've swearing kiss'd, and kissing sworn!
And now, my gentle hints to clear,
For once, I'll tell you truth, my dear;
Whenever you may chance to meet
A loving youth, whose love is sweet,
Long as you're false, and he believes you
Long as you trust, and he deceives you
So long the blissful band endures;
And while he lies his heart is yours:
But oh! you've wholly lost the youth
The instant that he tells the truth.
(*Kingston Gazette*, July 30, 1811)

In this poem too the humour rests on a thin edge and threatens

to collapse into a morass of bitterness or moral castigation. The implication is that the male-female relationship can only be maintained, even superficially, by falsehood. It is difficult to say whether this implication reflects the inevitable tenuousness of marriage in a pioneer culture, or if the poet is hinting at what he feels to be a universal condition. If the latter, he is inferring an existential human solitude with which both Byron and twentieth century writers have dealt extensively.

Major Richardson's satire on sexual relations in *Kensington Gardens* is more straightforward. He had specific social targets and was general only in the sense that he was dealing with a group and a particular category of human behaviour. Philosophical implications are circumscribed by the immediate application of his thrusts and by the distraction of occasional salacious innuendo of which the following is an example:

> The Guards are comely men - that is they're tall -
> And women prize men often for their length;
> Though in some climes we frequent see the small
> Much more remarkable for use and strength,
> Being ever ready at a lady's call;
> (Few ladies said as much for our swell Tenth)
> Or in the ball room, boudoir, or the grove,
> Or any other place designed for love.
> (*Kensington Gardens*, p. 5)

This and the earlier poem on the Duke of Clarence are the only passages from Upper Canadian verse which can approximate the blatant sexuality found in a number of Lower Canadian productions. Even the sensuality which liquidly pervades these lines of Burwell are rare in the western province's verse:

No yellow tassels that adorn
The virgin ears of Indian corn,
No vernal foliage may compare,
My Stella, with thine auburn hair,
That hangs in tresses round thy face,
Waving with undulating grace,
And downwards rolls itself to deck
The shoulders fine and ivory neck,
And e'en in playful curls descends,
And touches with its crispy ends
The twin protuberances that rest
Their bases on the swelling chest.
The rose that dewy nectar slips,
Or is it with vermillion bright
Ting'd so as more to charm the sight
Than the fair flowers of either cheek,
That bloom, and blush - nay almost speak?
Or is the lilly's white exprest
Better than on thy snowy breast?
Or would the leaf its texture dare
At all with thy soft skin compare?
Or could the vocal sounding grove
With Stella vie in notes of love,
Or give to the delighted ear
Those strains 'tis rapture e'en to hear?
Or is the perfume-bearing gale
That revels in the flowery vale,
More frequent than thy balmy breath?
Or are less beautiful thy teeth
Than pearly drops of dew morn
That glitter on the leafy thorn?
(*The Scribbler*, Apr. 4, 1822, I, 330-333;
The Poems..., p. 33)

Attention to the physical and the purely social dimensions of life was ultimately limited in the verse of Upper Canada by a prominent religious vision. This did not approach in intensity or volume the religiosity of Maritime poetry but it was much more pronounced and much more prevalent than in the poetry of Lower Canada. The predominance of the religious vision in the poetry of the Maritimes was undoubtedly owing, as suggested in Chapter II, to the Puritan background of many of the inhabitants. In Upper Canada a similar cultural heritage might

have been at work, for, although these settlers had come from a variety of places, the Calvinist influence was significant to each whether Presbyterian, Methodist, or some other sect.

A further compulsion was undoubtedly provided by the physical environment. Upper Canada was virgin territory for settlement and therefore more demanding. The land had not been prepared by Acadians and there was no settled civilization to move into as in Quebec. The province was climatically harsh and its vastness resulted in isolation which could be and sometimes was both physically and psychologically destructive.

Death was a common figure in this landscape and its constant existence, potential and real, was paralleled by an equally pervasive presence in the province's verse. Death was the most popular theme in the poetic repertoire of Upper Canada, and the eulogy was the most frequently employed form.

Many of these eulogies were addressed to children. This is not surprising in view of the fact that an extremely high infant mortality rate was an inevitable aspect of pioneer life. Frequently, a simplistic consolation was offered by the poet to the bereaved relatives. Adam Hood Burwell declared in a poem on the demise of a five-month old girl that death was but the passage into a better, happier state of existence, and so the tears occasioned by the child's passing should be tears of affection, not tears of despair:

> Then weep, - 'tis right those tears should dim
> The eye, and stain the cheek of grief:
> Affection calls, and while they flow,
> They bring the balm of sweet relief.

Then weep, my friends - but not as one
Who sees no hopes beyond the grave;
Who death regards as only sent
To test our joys, and to bereave.

For death is but the messenger
Of him who sits and rules above,
To call us hence to yonder world,
Where all is joy, and peace and love.
(*Niagara Gleaner*, Apr. 26, 1823)

Burwell offered even greater consolation on the occasion of another childhood death when he elaborately praised the child for the positive attributes which he had already begun to display; the poet concluded his address with the conventional statement that the child was too good for this sorry existence:

The eye of heaven beheld thee, peerless child!
A flower too fair to feel the blasts of time; -
The hand of heaven took thee full soon from hence
To plant thee in a more congenial clime.

Ah, doubly blest! to join the angelic band,
From this vile earth and its attractions free,
With soul unstain'd by sin's polluting hand,
A grateful offering to the Deity.
(*Weekly Register*, Aug. 1, 1822)

Such claims for the innocence of childhood are easy to accept as a matter of convention. The strategy was a little different when the eulogized was an adult. Burwell then dwelled upon the separation of body and spirit, and justified his assurance that the deceased had negated death by evoking the liberating sacrifice of Christ:

Then, to Death they replied: - Thou hast fail'd of thine aim:
'Tis but *clay* thou hast gotten beside thee:
And the day draweth nigh when thy charnel-house game
Will spurn at thy rule and deride thee.

For the trumpet of Gabriel shall waken the dead
When the journey of time is completed:

Then where is thy sting? - all its venom is fled,
And the malice of hell is defeated.

The body that forms thy proud revel to-day
Shall be fill'd with you Seraph to-morrow;
And glory immortal shall crown the poor clay
That was once a frail mansion of sorrow.
(*U. E. Loyalist*, June 24, 1826)

The effort of the poet in each of these three poems has been to transform death from a negative threat of mortality into a positive agent of immortality. He achieved his purpose by confidently evoking the figures of beneficent deity and eternal paradise. Some poems of death, however, looked in the opposite direction - back towards life - in order to draw out their particular message, and to make death into a positive force. The writers of these works depicted death as a release *from* life rather than a passage *into* an after-life. These men were overwhelmed by the negative aspects of mundane existence, seeing life as bleak, painful, and of course, transient. According to one writer, Angus McDonnell, this world is a place where "oft misfortunes and distress / Force its inhabitants to wish for death -" (*Upper Canada Gazette*, May 16, 1801).

A *contemptus mundi* vision made death positive to such writers as McDonnell. Others expressed this vision without reference to death but with at least an implicit comparison to a better life hereafter. Cawdell stated:

In ev'ry path of life we'll find,
The cares and sorrows of mankind;
Content and pleasure's radiant beams,
Are ever vain deluding beams.

Ne'er to be born, or soon to die
Joys [surely] are we can't deny,
Maxims of Vice are hated sound;
In all the various stations found.
— (*Wandering Rhymer*, p. 17)

But in another poem he said:

But lasting bliss was he'er design'd
For mortals here below,
Kind Heaven ordains that this our life,
Should e'er be mix'd with woe.
(*Ibid.*, p. 14)

Resignation to some writers was the only immediate response possible for contending with the present bleakness:

Teach me with charity to view
The failings of my kind:
In confidence of future bliss,
Here may I be resigned.
(*Niagara Gleaner*, Jan. 14, 1826)

To others, virtue gave a more positive glow to the process of life, despite its variety and ephemerality:

For what is knowledge, grandeur, wealth, and power,
Deceitful pageants of a short liv'd hour.
Unless sweet virtue o'er the heart presides
Its flight restrains, and various motions guides.
(*York Gazette*, Aug. 27, 1808)

To most, however, religion made the cross of mortality bearable. The teachings of religion, it was felt, consoled one with the lesson of divine love and of the potential fulfilment of hope, especially in the face of death:

And thou, sweet child of heaven! religion fair,
That dries the tear and soothes the pang of care -
Which flings a brightness o'er this vale of gloom,
And cheers the lonely passage to the tomb -
Thee, thee we hail at this propitious hour,
And own the heavenly magic of thy power -
Confess the fervour of that grateful love
Which links mortality to realms above -

And boast the glow of hope which bids us rise,
Led by the radiant pinions, to the skies.
(*Weekly Register*, Aug. 28, 1825)

Religion was to many, in fact, the only true source of happiness on earth, and the happiness which it brought was not merely a matter of resignation. Real pleasure could be and was felt in the purity and serenity of life which the religious adherent enjoyed:

Divine Religion! enraptur'd, best,
Of all that yields a bliss below;
The only source where pleasures last
Or a true *relish* e'er bestow.

So pure and perfect is thy flame,
No sordid passion dare intrude,
Within the sphere thy radiant name
Illumes with thy beatitude.

Celestial nymph! thy heav'nly mien
Dost cheer each dark and sombre ray;
And fill with hope and peace serene,
Each troubled *soul* that owns thy sway.
(*Niagara Gleaner*, Nov. 13, 1824)

In these poems, religion is spoken of in only the most general fashion. Particular sects are not mentioned or praised. There are no poems of such a nature extant in the canon of Upper Canada, nor are there poems written in praise of particular religious figures, not even in the Catholic periodical, the *Canadian Freeman*. There was sectarian opposition in the province but the controversy which was even then centring around the clergy reserves was not yet being intensely waged in the province's verse. The verse seems to have remained latitudinarian even if the society itself did not.

A milder form of this paradox is also apparent in the depiction of God in the early verse of the province. It has been noted previously

that many of Upper Canada's residents had a Calvinistic background and it could be said that this heritage has been reflected in the prevalent *contemptus mundi* attitude of a substantial portion of the early poetry, but it was not reflected in the figure of the deity propounded by that poetry. This was not the characteristic Old Testament God, unflinching in His demand for exact justice. He was instead a very benevolent being on the whole, exercising great mercy, as Burwell illustrated in his poem "The Exile's Return." Here the poet dramatically described at great length the plight of a man overboard, afloat on a vast and empty ocean for what seemed to him to be an interminable length of time. Deeming his prospects hopeless, this individual in despair curses his God and his fate. Yet he is eventually saved and forced to recognize (along with the reader, Burwell hoped) the beneficence of this merciful God:

> Yes, I did feel that the Almighty God
> Had done this fearful act! - the mad controul
> Of wild, impotent rage, objectless wrath,
> Assail'd and took possession of my soul.
>
> I gnash'd my teeth - I curs'd myself - my God! -
> With bitter tears and yells blasphemed his name -
> Arraign'd his justice and denounced his laws,
> And burned with fury as with raging flame!
>
> Poor, hapless worm! - where did those curses fall?
> Who heard those impious blasts of feeble breath?
> The God of mercy heard - and he forgave
> The mad reproach, and saved my soul from death.
>
> His tender mercy, tho' I knew it not,
> Was with me still, me miserable, blind;
> His hand restrain'd the deep devouring flood,
> And ruled the dangers of the threat'ning wind.
>
> (*The Poems...*, p. 61)

In this poem nature has taught man the presence and the character of God. Nature was a popular topic for the poets of Upper Canada, more so than for either Lower Canadian or Maritime versifiers, and it was often used as a religious emblem, or to teach a religious truth as above. Flowers were sometimes made to signify God's blessings to man, while the moon was employed as an emblem of spiritual tranquility in this world, and the stars served as emblems of mortal transience. The seasonal cycle was the favourite emblem for the religiously oriented poet, however. Through it he could justify a belief in the immortality of the spirit:

> Nature's glories fast decaying,
> See the charms of beauty die,
> Gentle breezes cease their playing,
> Hear the deep autumnal sigh.
>
> See the mountain's fading verdure,
> See the foliage turning pale,
> See the quick and fleeting shadow,
> 'Tis the dark autumnal veil.
>
> . . .
>
> Lovely prospects fair and blooming,
> Will they ne'er revive again?
> Yes, when Spring, her pow'r assuming,
> Shall assert her plastic reign...
>
> O! gay youths! 'tis worth beholding;
> Here life's page we clearly scan,
> Scenes, the seasons are unfolding,
> Emblems true of dying man.
>
> "As change the seasons, drear and vernal,
> "So in the grave we soon must lie,
> "But the spirit is eternal,
> "The soul of man will never die!!
> (*Kingston Gazette*, Oct. 10, 1815)

Both theme and presentation in this instance are simplistic, even cliché. Burwell again plumbed further the relative subtleties

of the theme in his poem, "Farewell to the Shores of Erie." The poet herein described himself as an integral part of the natural growth of the landscape: "Nursed by thy wilds and solitudes, my youth / Grew like the plants that flourish on thy soil." He went on to claim that poetry taught him to recognize in nature the glorious presence and mercy of God:

> She taught me to behold in thy pure sky
> Its thousand glories with exalted soul;
> And when its thunders raised their voice on high,
> To hear *His* voice who shakes the utmost pole.
>
> She taught me to behold in field and flower,
> In wood and wild, the charms of nature glow;
> In wind and storm - the emblems of his power -,
> Nor less when soft the whispering breezes blow,
>
> . . . .
>
> The ways of God she bade me to compare,
> In nature's walks, with His displays of grace.
> If here was wisdom, mercy sure was there,
> And love divine beamed from the Father's face.
> (*U. E. Loyalist*, Jan. 20, 1827; *Gore Gazette*, Mar. 6, 1827; *The Poems...*, pp. 72-75)

Note again that nature was realized to be emblematic of divine truth in both its creative and its destructive aspects through the intervening process of poetic creation. Burwell has given important educative roles to both nature and poetry.

Even the exploitation of nature was regarded by Burwell, and undoubtedly also by many settlers, as having a moral cast. Nature alone, without the ordering and ameliorating presence of man, is described in "Talbot Road" to be a profuse and chaotic waste. Its richness is vain unless utilized by man, say both narrator and his hero, Colonel Talbot:

> Productive nature smiles o'er all this land,
> And strews her bounties with a lavish hand,
> In wild profusion - soft meand'ring rills,

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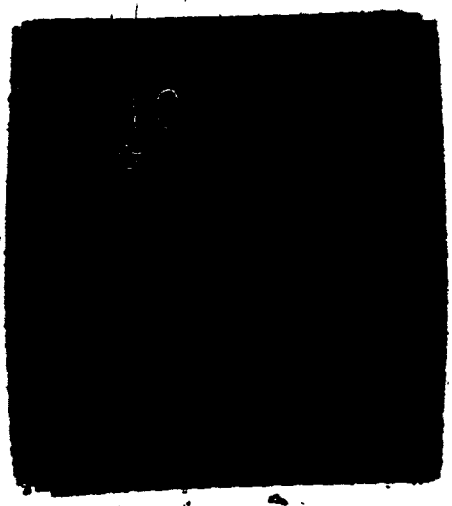

Deep woods, rich dales, smooth plains, and sunny hills,
Sylvan recesses, dark o'erhanging groves,
Where vocal songsters tune their throats to loves;
Where lurks the fox in crafty, sly career,
And in light gambols bounds the wary deer,
A land like this, created for delight,
Industry's hardy sons might well invite,
And quickly call the energetic worth,
And powers of enterprising freemen forth,
Whose hands would soon transform the rugged wilds
To fruitful fields, and bid tam'd nature smile.

Talbot was first who trod this desert ground,
Its woods he pierc'd, its situation found;
And two fair towns, from geographic night,
Bayham and Mallahide, were brought to light;
The whole he canvass'd, its importance weigh'd
And, in his mind, its future state survey'd,
'Ah why,' he cried, 'should nature work in vain?
Why this fair land untenanted remain?
Why unappropriated lie the soil,
And thousands want its 'vantages the while?
It must not be - No, soon the lofty oak
Shall bow before the sturdy woodman's stroke;
Earth shall resign the burden of her breast,
And wear a richer, variegated vest;
Man shall be here, yes, man shall swarm the ground,
And far as its extremest limits lie,
A beauteous zone shall guide the stranger's eye,
Then, mine the task to see this work begun,
And mine the pleasure to behold it done.
(*The Poems...*, p. 6-7)

The forces of industry and commerce evoked by the diction of this passage and by the poem's vocabulary throughout give a materialistic character to Burwell's outlook which cannot be denied, but which is correlative to his moral vision. He described Talbot's plan as being approved by Heaven:

Angels look'd down, propitious from above,
And o'er his labors breath'd celestial love: -
'Go on and prosper, for thine eyes shall see
The steps of thousands, soon to follow thee;
Go on and prosper, for the fostering hand
Of heaven, shall plant this highly favor'd land.'
(*Ibid.*, p. 7)

And finally, he described the tamed wilderness as an idyllic Eden:

> On every farm a stately mansion stands,
> That the surrounding fields at once commands,
> Where, oft, the farmer contemplates alone,
> The little Eden that he calls his own,
> Blest spot! sacred to pure, domestic joy,
> Where love and duty find the sweet employ,
> On either side the road a stately row
> Of shady trees present a sylvan show-
> Whose tops, wide arching, o'er the center meet,
> And guard the passenger from noon-day heat,
> Beneath them, nature's rich, green velvet spread
> In grassy carpets, or the tufted bed,
> To the tir'd foot, a softer walk invites -
> Or evening ramblers, innocent delights.
> There children, sporting in the willowy shade,
> Shall watch the changing forms by moonlight made
> Thro' waving branches, and, in tricks essay
> To catch the phantoms e'er they flit away.
> The trusty watch dog, tarries by the gate,
> As if entrusted with his master's fate,
> Hails every foot step that is passing by,
> And warns the master with his faithful cry.
> (*I*[illegible], p. 17)

Occasionally the lesson learned from nature was not explicitly linked to moral or religious truth. Burwell's "An Autumn Thought" (*The Poems...*, p. 25; *The Scribbler*, Nov. 1, 1821) elicits from the progression of the seasons the lesson of human mortality, but goes no further. One feels, however, that the dictum "Therefore; Prepare!" is understood. In "Nature's Broad Hint," which comes about as close to humorous statement as the normally sober Burwell ever came, nature's simple lesson is to pay attention to life and say little:

> When Nature made my frame,
> She gave me a broad hint,
> And if I look the proper way,
> I find there's plenty in 't,
> She gave me *two* eyes with which to see,
> *Two* ears with which to hear,
> *One* mouth with which to speak,
> From which one might infer,

That we should speak but little,
And hear and see much more;
Whilst those who use their mouths the most,
Her bounds must trespass o'er.
(*The Scribbler*, June 20, 1822;
The Poems..., p. 38)

Even here one feels that the lesson has an implicit moral application.

The moral compulsion did occasionally disappear and permit the composition of descriptive nature poetry, although even then the landscape attained significance through its effect upon man. The effect varied. Frequently, a gentle, pastoral landscape was described as suffusing the human perceptor with a delightfully delicate sensation of life's essential sweetness:

I wandered in a lonely glade,
Where, issuing from the purest shade,
A little mountain stream
Along the winding valley played,
Beneath the morning beam.

Light o'er the woods of dark brown oak,
The west wind wreath'd the hovering smoke
From cottage roofs conceal'd;
Below a rock abruptly broke,
In rosy light reveal'd.

'Twas in the infancy of May
The uplands glowed in green array,
While from the ranging eye,
The lessening landscape stretch'd away,
To meet the blending sky.

'Tis sweet, in solitude to hear,
The earliest music of the year,
The blackbird's loud wild note,
Or, from the wintry thickets drear,
The Thrush's stammering throat.

In rustic solitude 'tis sweet,
The earliest flowers of spring to greet,
The violet from its tomb,
The strawberry creeping at our feet,
The sorrel's simple bloom.
(*Kingston Gazette*, Jan. 20, 1816)

On other occasions, especially when the scene focused upon Niagara Falls, the viewer was overwhelmed by an awful sense of nature's sublimity:

> While the deep bellowing thunder breaks,
> The trembling earth, percussive, shakes -
> It totters on its quivering base,
> And seems as moving from its place.
> Heaven's thunders scarce, tho' dread to hear,
> More dreadful strike the astonish'd ear,
> Or dire tempest rolling vast,
> Borne on the force compelling blast -
> The terrors of the storm combined,
> So forcibly can strike the mind.
> Emerging from a veil of spray,
> The river shoots its giddy way,
> Deep channel'd in its rocky course,
> With eddies, whirls, and sweeping force.
> The towering rocks, a dreadful show,
> Dark frowning, shade the tide below,
> And cast a drear and solemn gloom,
> Like deep destruction's yawning tomb.
> There, from the river's stormy breast,
> An island rears its shaggy crest:
> With rugged rocks 'tis verged around -
> With venerable hemlocks crown'd,
> And cedars tall, whose evergreen
> Adds to the bold majestic scene.
> Below the isle, from both its sides,
> Two tumbling torrents join their tides,
> And boiling, plunging, foam away,
> Mantled in froth, and veiled in spray.
> (*The Scribbler*, July 18, 1822;
> *The Poems...*, p. 41)

Burwell's description is sufficiently vivid to convey emphatically the imposing presence of the Falls, but the poet went on to delineate specifically the effect upon the spectator:

> Here oft the raised spectator stands
> Astonish'd - with uplifted hands -
> His eye is fix'd in steadfast gaze -
> His soul is chain'd in deep amaze -
> His tongue forgets its power to speak -
> Imagination - wilder'd weak -
> Fancy, unfledg'd descends from flight, -
> Confounded - lost, in such a sight! -

What dread sublimity is here!
What awful grandeur doth appear!
We ponder on the scene before
Our eyes - we turn - we view once more:
Then turn away with mind deep fraught -
Big with unutterable thought.
(*Ibid.*)

This "unutterable thought" might have possessed as at least one of its components the sense of human insignificance which James Lynne Alexander experienced when he gazed upon Niagara:

How insignificant is man,
When in a scene like this he stands!
Here he may gain an awful sense
Of the Divine Omnipotence.
(*Wonders of the West*, p. 39)

But one is now back to nature as emblem of the divine.

Landscape, even in a new world, was recognized by Alexander and others to be capable of evoking the past, of conveying a sense of the history of a place. Alexander began his poem by recalling the fact that significant battles had already been fought on the Niagara frontier, and throughout the remainder of the poem he alternated between the relation of a sentimental love story involving some European tourists and the remembrance of several martial encounters from the War of 1812.

A much earlier poet, a decade before the War of 1812, had also been reminded of the past history of his region when he surveyed the scenery around Hamilton. He did not recall particular battles but dwelt elegiacally upon the disappearance of the Indian who had once inhabited this landscape:

Poor ghost, no more the Indian race
Shall here the pipe of peace relume,
No more their counsel fire shall blaze,
Nor that of feast disperse the gloom,

Lo! snakes obscene, along the prospect creep,
And oxen, o'er each worshipp'd circle sleep.

No more along the golden brook
The trophies of the chase shall fall;
Time treats alike the shrub and oak,
Whose power at length shall crush the ball.
Led by the circling hours with magic mien,
Gigantic change now treads the weeping scene.

No more the brave in strains sublime,
Their feats of hardihood proclaim,
To rescue from the rage of time
Each glorious deed approv'd by fame.
Deep in the dust is laid each bow unstrung,
And mute, for ever flopp'd each warrior tongue.

. . .

Let other heedless of the hill,
With eye incurious, pass along,
My muse with grief the scene shall fill,
And swell with softest sighs the song.
Ah pleased each vestig'd mansion to explore,
Where unschool'd wisdom dwelt, but dwells no more,

(*Upper Canada Gazette*, Mar. 7, 1801)

The poet's diction and emotion give an appropriate sense of epochal or cataclysmic change, but he did not seem to be thinking in terms of cultural clash. Rather, he attributed the disappearance of the Indian to an inevitable progression of history, envisioning the native as a victim of time, not a victim of the white man.

Alexander on the other hand intimated that the Indian had in some sense been victimized by the presence and mores of the white man:

Let Britons and Americans,
And all who boast themselves the sons
Of Britain, fam'd for chivalry,
Banish the cruel policy,
That led to war the Indian tribes,
Arm'd, and rewarded them besides,
To use the horrid scalping knife,
Against each wretched foeman's life.
Their native hate to enemies,
Thus strengthen'd by their avarice,

> The vanquish'd foe might sue in vain,
> To scape the ling'ring death of pain.
> Ne'er let such massacre be made,
> As by that treacherous ambuscade,
> When fell poor Braddock and his men,
> Victims of useless discipline.
> (*Wonders of the West*, p. 16)

The Indian himself does not escape implicit criticism here. Alexander depicted him as an individual already inclined to savagery and avarice. To his mind the white man had merely played upon and intensified the Indian's already existing negative traits.

Major Richardson's *Tecumseh* presented the Indian in a very positive light. The poem simultaneously denigrated white society, or at least a particular portion of that society: the poet attacked Americans in general and presented, albeit briefly, the British and Canadian commanders as reasonable and concerned men. In fact, they proved superior to Tecumseh in this respect, and Richardson implied that the latter's irrationality, while noble in a man of nature, would always leave him on a level inferior to the best of white society. Tecumseh's passion, though violent, was presented as laudable because it arose from a desire to protect his people and resulted in heroic deeds of arms directed to that purpose. The description of Tecumseh's personal slaughter of Americans in the Ohio country is infused with the admiration which the poet obviously felt for his subject:

XXIX.

> So, when victorious near the dark Wabash,
> His mighty arm achiev'd a world's repose,
> That eye with blasting fire was seen to flash,
> And with its very glance confound his foes,
> As, darting through the waves with fearful splash,
> He like a demon of the waters rose,

And carried death among the lawless band,
The ruthless wasters of his native land.

XXX.

Not the wild mammoth of Ohio's banks
Dash'd fiercer splashing through the foaming flood,
When his huge form press'd low the groaning ranks
Of giant oaks which deck'd his native wood,
Than rag'd Tecumseh through the deep phalanx
Of deadliest enemies soon bath'd in blood,
Whose quivering scalps, half-crimson'd in their gore,
The reeking warrior from the spoilers bore.

XXXI.

Blood of the Prophet! and of giant mould,
Undaunted leader of a dauntless band,
Vain were each effort of thy foes most bold
To stay the arm of slaughter, or withstand
The vivid lightnings of that eye where roll'd
Deep vengeance for the sufferings of a land
Long doom'd the partage of a numerous horde,
Whom lawless rapine o'er its vallies pour'd.
(*Tecumseh*, pp. 13-16)

Later, Tecumseh indicts the white man in terms with which Richardson seemed largely to concur, pointing out that the white man's abhorrence of Indian methods of warfare are at base hypocritical:

The whiteman terms them cruel, while his blade
Alone leaps thirsting from some victim's blood;
He hunts the peaceful Indian from his glade,
To seek the shelter in the pathless wood;
Then talks of direst treason, when, dismay'd,
He hears the war-cry where their homes once stood,
Nor fails the wily hunter to abhor,
Who differs from him but in terms of war!
(*Ibid.*, p. 38).

Finally the poem concludes with a vivid description of the ignominious mutilation of Tecumseh's corpse when he fell at Moraviantown, a description which receives additional intensity from the realization that Richardson was at that battle and was himself taken prisoner there.

The last stanzas maintain the simultaneous praise of Tecumseh and the moral indictment of the Americans:

LIV.

The sounds have ceas'd, and carnage is no more -
But he whose god was War, eternal, deep,
Lies pierc'd with wounds, and shapeless in his gore;
A lifeless, loathsome mass, which hate might weep,
And yield sepulture on the wild sea-shore:
May they who left him thus e'er howl, and creep
As vile through life as cruel in that hour,
Which gave the first of victims to their power.

LV.

In the lone night, when dissolution's pang
Shall paint the horrors of the gloomy grave,
Oh! may remembrance of that direful clang
Which rose infernal with the red-stain'd glaive -
The jests inhuman, and the shouts which rang
Insulting o'er the memory of the brave,
Like adder stings recoil upon each heart,
And blast the promise which their creeds impart.

LVI.

Then may the presence of some much-lov'd child,
Some faithful brother, or some hoary sire,
Recall *his* deeds, who by their arms defil'd,
Had spar'd their blood in many a battle dire;
And as the thought occurs, with recollections wild,
Ere yet the conscience-stricken wretch expire,
Oh may he hear his offspring loud proclaim
That Chieftain's worth, whose glory is his shame!

(*Ibid.*, pp. 107-108)

Tecumseh is a poem which is characteristic of the early verse of Upper Canada in several respects. It is a dramatic narrative, the relatively popular use of which distinguishes early poets of Upper Canada from their counterparts in Lower Canada and in the Maritimes. *Tecumseh's* subject matter was drawn from the poet's immediate environment as were the political, social, and natural themes of Upper Canada's

verse writers in general. Correlatively, exile verse was not characteristic of the province's output prior to 1830. Another corollary is that nature was written about more often and more directly than in the other two colonial areas. *Tecumseh* is about a "natural" man and includes a significant amount of nature description.

In the most general sense the verse of Upper Canada fits, in its topical and thematic emphases; somewhere between that of Lower Canada and of the Maritimes. Regional distinctions become increasingly difficult to make, however, as 1830 approaches, and after that date they cease to retain significant validity.

CHAPTER VI

POETRY IN CANADA FROM 1830 TO 1851

After 1830 the literary output of the British North American colonies increased rapidly. The pace of production had been steadily accelerating, especially with the new influx of settlers from the British Isles after 1815, but this pace was markedly slower than that precipitated by the immigration boom of the 1830's. This boom resulted in a notable increase not only in the production of books of poetry but also in the appearance of specifically literary periodicals which now were well on the way to replacing newspapers as the major depositories of colonial verse.

The change was most noticeable in Upper Canada, the youngest province and the one to which the greatest number of new settlers went. Upper Canada had not yet produced an independent literary periodical, whereas the Maritimes had published the *Nova Scotia Magazine* as early as 1789, and had followed it up with others, while Lower Canada had begun with the *Quebec Magazine* in 1792 and had enjoyed, as has been seen, a remarkable flowering of literary periodicals during the 1820's with *The Scribbler*, the *Canadian Magazine and Literary Repository*, and the *Canadian Review and Literary and Historical Journal*. None of these periodicals or the various others which appeared prior to 1830 lasted

very long; still they had exerted a definite impact upon the cultures of their particular areas. Upper Canada's attempts to produce literary periodicals had not enjoyed even this dimension of success. Strachan's *Christian Recorder* (1819-1821) had a brief existence, and the *Weekly Register* and the *U. E. Loyalist* were temporary adjuncts of the *York Gazette* rather than independent journals in their own right.

In the 1830's independent journals did begin to appear in Upper Canada and while George Gurnett's *Canadian Literary Magazine* and Robert Stanton's *Canadian Magazine* both had brief existences in York in 1833, they did initiate a flurry of journal publishing in the province which lasted until the Montreal-based *Literary Garland* established a virtual monopoly over the Canadian colonial magazine market near the end of the decade. Before 1840, however, Upper Canada had given birth to the *British American Journal*, and the *Canadian, British American, and West Indian Magazine*.[1] The only significant effort at magazine publication in the province after the inception of the *Literary Garland* and before its demise in 1851 was that by Colonel and Mrs. Moodie which produced the *Victoria Magazine* in Belleville from 1847 to 1848.

Meanwhile the book publication of poetry which had, of necessity, been very minimal in Upper Canada prior to 1830 blossomed remarkably in the next two decades. At least twenty volumes of verse appeared during this period, composed by such men as A. J. Williamson,[2] Daniel Haydn Mayne,[3] John Galt,[4] William A. Stephens,[5] Sir John Smyth,[6] George W. Gillespie,[7] John Rumsey,[8] James K. Liston,[9] Alexander M'Lachlan,[10] John Breakenridge,[11] John Newton,[12] and James Haskins.[13] There were, in addition, anonymous volumes and at least one anthology, *The Canadian*

Christian Offering, edited by Reverend Robert Jackson MacGeorge.[14]

The publication of books of verse in the Maritimes slightly exceeded that of Upper Canada during this period, comprising about twenty-five volumes, and consisting of the work of such writers as Peter Fisher,[15] Joseph Howe, John K. Laskey,[16] William Martin Leggett,[17] William Pope,[18] and Henrietta Prescott.[19] In addition there were a few anonymous works but no anthologies. Nor were there many literary periodicals: the *Halifax Monthly Magazine*, *The Bee*, and the *Colonial Pearl* all appeared before Montreal's *Literary Garland* became solidly established and were not replaced by any other significant literary magazines while the latter remained in existence.

The *Literary Garland* was clearly Lower Canada's major contribution to the history of Canadian verse between 1830 and 1851. While it was the longest lived and most successful literary journal to be published in the province during this period, it was not the only one: The *Montreal Museum* had a brief life in the early 1830's, and *The Magic Lantern* unsuccessfully challenged the *Garland* in 1848. The latter ran to thirteen volumes, more than the number of books of poetry that were published in Lower Canada during this period. Among the authors of these books were Robert Sweeny (whom we have noted earlier), John H. Willis,[20] J. G. Ward,[21] Lynch Lawdon Sharpe,[22] M. Ethelind Sawtell,[23] Standish O'Grady,[24] Reverend George J. Mountain,[25] David Wylie[26] and F. B. Ryan.[27] Most of these people, and, indeed, a large number of the poets from the Maritimes and from Upper Canada as well, had their work published in the pages of the *Garland*, making that journal an

appropriate symbol of the homogeneity which the poetry of the three regions was now assuming, and retaining for Lower Canada an important role in the development of Canadian verse at a time when the volume of production from that province was diminishing in comparison to that of the other two regions.

As we have already stated, the verse written in the different areas of British North America achieved an essential similarity of character in the period following 1830. As with most dates in literary history, this one does not indicate a sharp break with the past. The process of transformation was really a gradual one which had already begun before 1830, and furthermore the change was not completely effected until after the rebellions of 1837, when the attraction to socio-political themes by verse writers seemed to have been markedly soured, with the consequence that the poets turned their attention almost exclusively to the genteel virtues of sentimental romance and sentimental religion. This swing in emphasis, which had not been necessary in the Maritimes, had in fact, already begun in Upper and Lower Canada, but the rebellions certainly hastened its completion.

This swing did not result in a disregard by the Canadian poet for his own particular time and place. In fact, between 1830 and 1851, he placed an ever-increasing emphasis upon his immediate social and natural environment. True, John Breakenridge and others did look outward both in terms of space and time to write poems about mediaeval crusades and Biblical legends or about contemporary European political and military matters, but it is clear that more attention was afforded

on the whole to internal Canadian affairs - to political matters before 1838, to the problems of settling the country (John Newton, Standish O'Grady and Alexander M'Lachlan all published volumes entitled *The Emigrant)*, and to the landscape itself. Thomas MacQueen's exhortation

> Then let us sing our forest homes,
> Canadian lakes and rivers wide -
> Not coldly as the bard who roams,
> Through other lands with envious pride;
> But let us wake devotion's powers
> To feel those homes and scenes are *ours*.
> *(Victoria Magazine*, Jan. 1848, p. 103)

was already being fulfilled, at least in terms of the material which was being chosen by the Canadian poet, and even to a marked extent in terms of the poetic emotion informing that material.

It must be admitted that the Canadian poet, stylistically, was still speaking for the most part in borrowed voices. And his models were still too often selected from among popular versifiers, sentimental romanticists and moralists such as the omnipresent Mrs. Hemans, Bishop Heber, Laetitia Landon, and Mrs. Sigourney of the United States. Some evidence exists that better models were being more frequently employed. Byron's presence continued to be felt, although through his darkly romantic verse narratives rather than through his satires. Even then the source was most likely to be transofrmed to make it morally acceptable. The Canadian versifiers clearly knew Wordsworth, Shelley, Keats and Tennyson but took little of any great significance from these men, deriving their influence instead from diluted and distorted imitations (from the second rank writers already mentioned):

The forms of Canadian verse did alter noticeably in the midst of all this imitation. They became much more various, ranging from simple ballad and lyric forms, through the great flexibility of the ode, to lengthy and sometimes convoluted narratives, with, as shall be seen later, even the composition of a prose poem. Metrical arrangements also achieved greater variety extending from trimeter to hexameter and with a greater use of metrical feet other than the iamb. The Canadian verse writer did not create any new poetic forms but he was attaining a level of proficiency in the use of a variety of traditional styles, increasing his repertoire at the very least.

Until 1837 "loyalists" and "radicals" continued to conduct a portion of their struggles in the medium of verse, though in a decreasing volume. As the conflict became fiercer, the inherent stringency of verse, even doggerel, seemed less amenable to the tempers of the combatants. The "loyal" poets indulged in brief and comparatively mild exultation upon the ultimate defeat of the "radicals," but their attention quickly passed on to less political, albeit related, matters.

The "radical" viewpoint in verse was restricted in publication to a few "radical" weeklies, primarily in Upper Canada. The most famous of these was, of course, William Lyon Mackenzie's *Colonial Advocate* which continued until 1834. Mackenzie also ran a paper called *The Constitution* from early 1836 until 1837. A third notable "radical" organ was *The Liberal* of St. Thomas which Rufus Cotton[28] printed for editor A. B. Lewis[29] from September 1832 until October 1833.

The "radicals" were commonly accused by their opponents of being agents of the United States, or at the very least, of being

republican sympathizers, and their numbers very likely did include a few such, but they saw themselves as the only true "loyalists" in the province. The following poem, for example, exhorts true British subjects to throw off the bonds of tyranny which the alleged "Loyalists" wished to fit upon the people:

> Those who defend our civil weal,
> And our religious Liberty,
> Traduced by bastard loyal zeal,
> And branded with Democracy.
> These worthies stood in danger's gap,
> When hostile furniture of War
> Glistened in many a frightful shape,
> Inflicting many a fearful scar.
> But hirelings in the battle day,
> When bullets hiss and canons roar,
> At a safe distance skulked away,
> Or refuged on the rebel shore,
> Now war is past and we enjoy
> A season of tranquility,
> Each *tory* bird peeps out to try
> His Cuckoo note of LOYALTY.
> But while these office-seekers sing,
> Their song to flatter wealth and power,
> Let us who love our Patriot King,
> Stand for our rights in danger's hour.
> Shall truth be stifled, freedom gasp,
> And genius clothed in mourning stand?
> Shall lazy fattening bigots grasp,
> One seventh of this happy land?
> Shall British subjects tamely bow
> Their free-born necks of tyranny?
> Never while British feelings show,
> A love of British liberty.
> (*The Liberal*, Mar. 7, 1833)

It is clear that the writer of these lines wished to distinguish carefully between the local colonial administration and the government of Britain. In almost all of their poetry, the "radicals" were quite hesitant to attribute the responsibility of their problems to authorities outside the colonies. An attack such as the following was seldom made, and even here it is worth noting that the writer insisted upon his

loyalty and upon his British identity:

A Princely Toast
Death to all Free Governments

'Twas madly express'd by the curse of the Prussians,
'Twas boldly profess'd by the scourge of the Russians;
Well pleas'd with the sentence the Austrian appear'd,
And Nassau's descendents the sentiment cheer'd.

But who would suppose that in Liberty's Isle,
A doctrine so fell was receiv'd with a smile;
Yes, 'tis mournfully true, for the Oligarchs there
Love Freedom as Oligarchs love it elsewhere;

And recent transactions have made it appear,
The noxious exotic is flourishing here.
Outrageously loyal - that is, in pretence,
Yet kingly and popular forms would dispense.

On the choice of the people they fasten'd the latch,
And expung'd from their journals a Sovereign's Despatch:
And mad as March hares at the conduct of Colborne,
They wish'd him remov'd to a post beyond Holborn.

. . . .

The page of our history blushes at facts
Recorded - but still more revolting the acts
Contemplated - all rights both religious and civil,
By the vote of a few may be sent to the d__l.

Shall a faction be form'd by a few of the great?
Shall they domineer who have purchas'd our hate?
Shall ruffians and scoundrels combin'd
Model your government just to their mind?

. . . .

Can Upper Canadians assist in a work,
That scowl would imprint on the brow of a Turk;
That would rouse from his torpor a servile of Spain,
And shall Middlesex yeomen in bondage remain?

Forbid it the shades of the heroes who fell
Oh Britons your rights to secure, shall the knell
Of your Freedom be sounded, and you toll the bell?
No! rise in your strength, and the deadly intent
Of the foes of the world, by your union prevent,
Ye're loyal, and until your forbearance shall cease
A virtue to be - let your motto be peace.

(*The Liberal*, Apr. 4, 1833)

Despite his professions of loyalty to the king and mother-country, this versifier, it is clear, was advocating a brand of democracy that Britain would not have found congenial to her own institutions and style of government. His sentiments were expressed in a sufficiently general fashion, however, to avoid accusations of hypocrisy, and he probably saw no contradictions himself.

Since the colonial authorities in England did not escape the lash of "radical" satire, it is hardly surprising that their representative in Upper Canada was attacked, as in the following poem by Stephen Randal.[30] (The poem's preface is an integral part of the piece and is therefore included in the quotation.)

Song - I'll Be a Tory

I am out at the elbows and destitute of everything but a stout heart, a stiff upper lip, and a contempt for all the powers that be.

I therefore *will* to be a Tory, out of spite entirely.

I compose and publish the following SONG, intending it *for sale* - for the purpose of procuring for myself food and raiment and money enough to carry me in a Tory dress, that is to say, a black coat and clean shirt, *forever* out of the Province

The *Poetry* is worth two York shillings of any man's money that has it to spend or can borrow it of his neighbour.

Those who *please* may give more than two York shillings - the more the better.

The *music*, except that of the chorus, which is the same as that of the fashionable song "I'D BE A BUTTERFLY," can be learned by calling at the office of "the Government," where it is continually sung, in all the Departments.

Dedicated to Sir F. B. Head, without his permission.

CHORUS - I'll be a Tory - I'll be a Tory,
I'll be a Tory in Upper Canada.
Repeat - I'll be a Tory - I'll be a Tory,
I'll be a Tory in Upper Canada.

I'll be "RESPONSIBLE",
I'll keep my *Council* dull,
All Reformers down I'll pull,
I'll fill the Province full
Of the Sons of Old John Bull,
I'll break each rebel skull,
That "dares to come" like Gen'ral Hull,
When old Prevost was made a fool.

I'll drown Mackenzie's types,
I'll cut him into stripes,
I'll put on the shoe that gripes,
I'll send out the *patent snipes*,
For this *Glenelg* my conscience wipes;
I'll treat to heavy swipes!!
I care not who rots or ripes -
I'll dance whoever pipes.

. . .

SIMCOE, PERRIE, and SIR JOHN,
Lack'd my rule to go upon,
In spelling CON-STI-TU-TI-ON, -
They tho't the king was *Burk'd* so strong,
Its letter must be acted on -
But I'll be HEAD upon the throne -
Deal "bread and butter" - "pick the bone" -
I'll be, THE CON - STI - TU - TI - ON.
(*The Constitution*, July 27, 1836)

The satire is all the more effective for having allowed its victim to speak for himself, although the poem's syntactical and metrical roughness, together with its numbingly repetitive rhyme, undercuts that effectiveness.

Less sophisticated, but more direct, and equally forceful was the following attack upon Egerton Ryerson who had once been a prominent antagonist of the Family Compact, especially concerning clergy reserves, but who had sometime since abandoned the "radical" cause:

For Ryerson blush, my honest muse,
The "old Apostate" chief,
Whose doublings in the "*Guardian News*"
Exceeds almost belief,
Since Arnold fill'd his desperate need,
No page, no life has shown,

So base, so foul, so black a deed,
  So blushless, though well known.
Since Judas liv'd, no human head,
  Has shown the traitor's scowl,
In bolder, blacker, lines than dread
  Saint Egerton the OWL.
(*The Constitution*, Sept. 13, 1837)

Historians have generally exonerated Ryerson of any charges of hypocrisy, but clearly those who were caught up in the furor of the events could not be expected to make such objective evaluations especially when they saw ranged against them a man of Ryerson's stature and abilities, a man who, by their system of logic, ought to be one of their own number. The intensity of the above denunciation is understandable.

The "radical" position throughout the thirties was countered in most of the newspapers and journals of the province by occasional verse proclaiming in monotonous hyperbole the virtue of maintaining an undeviating loyalty to Britain and the crown. The sentiments were customarily uttered in vague general terms, with only an occasional venture into the realm of specific attack upon "radical" leaders such as Mackenzie, or in reply to "radical" challenges concerning government policies or social issues. It is almost as though the "loyalists" felt so certain of the absolute correctness of their position that they saw no need to enter into debate.

Surprisingly, more "loyal" verse seems to have been written after the "radicals" had been scattered by their abortive uprising. For example, George Gillespie then put forth the following estimation of Mackenzie's character:

Frae wrangling he could never rest;
He was an ettercamp and pest;

Now few or nane, frae east to west,
His yammering heed;
It was a mad attempt, at best.
And couldna speed.
(*Miscellaneous Poems*, p. 57)

The relative mildness of this attack was obviously the consequence of the security which Mackenzie's defeat brought to those of the Tory persuasion.

Papineau, the leader of the Lower Canadian rebels, also became the object of poetic attack after his rebellion had failed, but Standish O'Grady for one did not discuss him mildly nor relegate him complacently to a position of ineffectuality. O'Grady saw Papineau instead as a vile, cowardly tyrant who had led his followers to ignominious death in the cause of another nation while convincing them that they were fighting on their own behalf:

. . . the glib-tongued Patriot Papineau;
. . . sighed for the liberty yet left for this
A floating phantom bubble for a bliss,

. . . .

He loved the treason yet with traitor's dread,
When dealt the poison politic he fled
For him the bold, intrepid peasants bleed,
Or on the scaffold expiate the deed;
For him the lone deserted hamlet lies,
A wasted ruin and sad sacrifice:
For him the assassin stabs the peaceful breast,
And prowls malignant through the wintry waste;
For him the battle, fallen is the foe,
Immersed, concealed in cataracts of snow;
With no proud urn or monument's device,
Embalmed, embedded, in *their Tombs* of *ice,*
There clad inglorious with *no kindred* clay,
To feed the famished vultures of the day,
Or those of keener senses who prowl to share,
Perchance the wolf, the wild dog or the Bear.
Revolving spring unveils each strife-earned pass,
Each meagre mouldering mutilated mass;
If sought, one look each ghastly scull retains,
Alike their bones all blanch upon the plains,
. . .

(*The Emigrant*, pp. 88-89)

O'Grady's attack upon Papineau is indirect but forceful. His attention to the lugubrious detritus of war arouses a repulsion on the part of the reader which the poet is able to utilize successfully against the leader while simultaneously evoking the reader's sympathy for the followers. In pursuing this strategy, O'Grady was employing an established tactic of interpreting popular political disruption as the responsibility of a few self-seekers who had managed to delude some otherwise honourable citizens. Earlier Canadian poets had said as much of the American Revolution.

The poets of Lower Canada did not restrict their criticism to rebels alone. At least one directed his satire against a minister of the Crown. In 1838, Lynch Lawdon Sharpe published a "mono-dramatico-political poem" entitled *The Viceroy's Dream; or, The Canadian Government Not "Wide Awake."* In it, he comically depicted Lord Durham as having idiots for advisors, and attacked him for attempting to establish a dictatorship for himself in Canada. David Wylie later greeted Lord Elgin in a much more congenial fashion, but nevertheless cautioned the new governor of the Canadas as to where his responsibilities lay:

> Responsibility, with some, is first, and last, and all,
> "Come pin your faith to my coat sleeve, or else the state will fall;"
> Our governor, we freely say, must be at no man's nod,
> His acts must tell for this belief - Responsible to God.
> (*Recollections of a Convict*, p. 197)

Wylie must have been quite disappointed when Elgin interpreted his role in a different fashion and fathered responsible government in Canada.

As the 1840's wore on in Canada West, poetic anti-radicalism became more general in its focus. Rather than attacking particular

individuals, writers such as John Newton assailed what they believed to be the type of the radical. In the lengthy title poem of Newton's volume, *The Emigrant*, this type is assigned characteristics similar to those which we saw applied to Papineau by O'Grady: hypocritical, cowardly, self-centred, immoral, pretentious, and perversely intent upon misleading the ignorant and innocent.

To conservative minds such as Newton's, radicals were really democrats, and, consequently, the United States, popular symbol of democracy, was a prominent object of assault. Newton depicted that nation as the chaotic product of misdirected and faulty ideas, and an inevitable disappointment for the poem's hero who had hitherto been a radical:

> His disappointment knew no bounds of course,
> When stern reality succeeded empty dreams;
> For he, like most philosophers, the source
> Of human ill somewhat o'erlooked, it seems.
> He, like some others sought the cause
> Of *social* happiness in *sounding* laws;
> Now saw where men are left alone to seek
> Their wealth and power as to them seems right;
> The strong and wicked must oppress the weak,
> And liberty and love give way to might.
> (*The Emigrant*, p. 32)

This object lesson of the failure of democracy was presented by Newton as sufficient to make his hero a Canadian Tory and so the poem ends.

In *Niagara Falls*, James K. Liston also denigrated the United States, and uttered the following condemnation of democracy as a general principle:

> . . . such a thing as flat equality
> Is no where to be found, and contrary
> To God's procedure, and exists alone
> In the foul brains of demagogues and fools

Who suck the poison of their well-spiced cant
Of liberty, equality, and right
Of men to be what, in the laws of Heaven,
Is no where found, and would its plans unhinge.
(*Niagara Falls*, p. 48)

Liston was undoubtedly not unique in finding divine sanction for his anti-democratic sentiments, but he is unique among Canada's versifiers of this period in insisting upon those sanctions as strongly as he does here.

Canadian poets also took some delight in pointing to the slavery issue in the United States as a blatant example of the essential hypocrisy of that country's democratic pretensions. The Reverend George Jehoshaphat Mountain was one of several who briefly upbraided the United States, exhorting it to

. . . think of those who bow
Beneath their burthens forced; beneath the lash
Toil worse than beasts (oh! blush, Columbia, now,
And haste the stigma from thy stars to dash).
(*Songs of the Wilderness*, p. 41)

Mrs. Moodie, in her abolitionist poem, "An Appeal to the Free," (*Literary Garland*, Feb. 1850, p. 88) also took the United States to task on the slavery issue, and even went so far as to exhort Britons to take some active part in the internal affairs of another nation, an unusual poetic stance in Canada at this time.

In none of these poems is the anti-Americanism as bitter or as direct as some of the examples from earlier chapters. There almost seems to exist, in fact, a desire to admire the United States, as indicated by the following adulation of George Washington:

Hail, patriot, hail, the nation's glory,
The brave, the great - the free;

Thy name shall dwell in deathless story,
When there's nought but dust of thee:
Mankind shall scatter blessings o'er thee,
The tyrant dread, the brave adore thee,
Great chief of liberty.
(*Reminiscences of a Soldier*, p. 60)

Further indication that old enmities had softened with the passage of time can be seen in the changed poetic attitude towards Napoleon. He became a very infrequent topic for poetic treatment, and on the few occasions when he was written about, he was used, as below, to illustrate the vicissitudes of fortune rather than, as formerly, to display the excesses of human malignancy:

Alas! his fate a lesson may
Of wisdom teach to those who stray
Through fortune's flow'ry meads;
Unmindful that her smiles at best,
However much in beauty drest,
Too oft to ruin leads.

The cup when full is hard to bear,
It needs the hand of skilful care
To save from spilling o'er;
And they are wise who like content,
With blessings such as heaven has sent,
Not vainly wish for more.
(*Hallowell Free Press*, May 26, 1833)

Here Napoleon is clearly not the ogre of many earlier depictions, but merely an overreacher who could not control what he managed to possess.

European affairs occasioned little comment by Canadian versifiers during this period. The nationalistic fervour with which that continent was continually seething received minimal attention. One cannot be surprised - after all, these colonies had just put down their own insurgents. That there were a few statements in support of various European insurgents may, in fact, constitute the real surprise.

Poland's struggles against German and Russian imperialism elicited several expressions of sympathy. These expressions occurred throughout the two decades under consideration and reflected the varying fortunes of the Polish patriots. In 1831, one writer declared that the struggle had fallen on hard times, and pleaded for a continuance of hope:

> Must KOSCIUSCO's land be trod again
> By hostile power? O where's the spirit that guides
> The sword, with vengeance bright, forced from its sheath
> By many wrongs upon its country heaped?
> Will it not drive the oppressor from the
> Land where first our PULASKI drew his breath?
> (*Canadian Casket*, Nov. 12, 1831)

Later, when Poland's prospects had apparently improved, William Martin Leggett was moved to exhort the Poles in a more confident voice:

> Patriots of a fallen land!
> Forward come with sword in hand!
> Make your last victorious stand,
> And burst the bands of slavery!
>
> Countless numbers shall oppose,
> Mighty squadrons round you close;
> But, what are Poland's tyrant foes,
> To Poland's native chivalry!
>
> . . .
>
> Sound my lyre, the Hero's meed,
> Tyrants fall and Tyrants bleed -
> Sound victorious Poland freed!
> Sound the swell of victory!
> (*The Forest Wreath*, p. 112)

Toward the end of the period, Poland's plight was still sufficiently dire, however, to wring from Michael Ryan[31] a bitter denunciation of her enemies with a concomitant passionate celebration of Polish revolutionary spirit (*Literary Garland*, Sept. 1851, p. 307).

British affairs outside of North America received no more poetic

attention during this period than did European affairs. Fewer still were the attacks on Britain for her imperialistic pursuits, but such attacks did occur. The most striking example was F. B. Ryan's *The Spirit's Lament; or, The Wrongs of Ireland*, a two hundred page excoriation in verse of Britain for her six hundred years mistreatment of the Irish. In a much milder, but still critical vein, was William Pope's evaluation of Britain's conduct in India:

> If vast the sins of nations are,
> Britons possess an ample share:
> Though brave in war, by land and sea,
> And often crowned by victory,
> Stern truth demands, confess we must,
> Their cause has not been always just.
> Oh! could we hear their tale of woes
> From where the sacred Ganges flows,
> Or India's plains their story tell
> Of Chieftains slain where thousands fell,
> Of plundered wealth, of Empire lost
> (Britannia's shame, and Asia's cost)
> Britons scarce guiltless would appear,
> Nor unimpeached their character.
> (*Reminiscences of Prince Edward Island*, p. 17)

Poems of this nature were anomalous. Britain continued to be praised far more often than she was blamed for her various exploits. In fact, her martial achievements in India upon which Pope above cast aspersions, were lauded by John Breakenridge. Under his pseudonym, "Claud Halcro" he published a poem celebrating British victory at "Moodkee and Ferozeshah":

> If England still will wear the crown of empire in the Ind;
> If still the victor's laurels her glorious brows shall bind,
> Rise! hurl the proud invader right back upon Lahore!
> Wake up, wake up the British cheer of victory once more.
>
> There charge the British legions, as their sires at Water-
> loo,

When the Old Guard of the Empire before their phalanx
flew;
So now, the Sikhs down hurtling, athwart the field they
flow;
Hark to the rattling musketry, hark to the broad-sword's
blow.

. . .

The fight goes bravely on ---next morn the British troops
are formed
Within the trenched Ferozeshah that yesternight they
stormed:
The cry to charge is given---before the sea of steel
Of bayonets advancing, the Sikhs in terror reel.
(*Literary Garland*, May, 1846, p. 240)

The style and the sentiment of Breakenridge's poem anticipate the jingoistic verse which celebrated British imperialism at the end of the nineteenth century.

Most Canadian writers, now, as later in the century, saw nothing wrong in British imperialism. On the contrary, they regarded it as a very positive moral force, bringing, at the expense of great effort and hardship to the British, the light of civilization to the primitive regions of the world. Henrietta Prescott extravagantly proclaimed this view in the lines below:

Old England's sons have borne afar,
Uncheck'd by want or pain,
The words of faith, and love, and hope,
By desert and by main;
Have bravely met the martyr's doom,
And, with uplifted hand,
Still pray'd that light might chase the shades
From ev'ry heathen land.
Fair temples in the wilderness
Rise up where they have been.
A blessing on our own dear land!
A blessing on our Queen!
(*Poems, Written in Newfoundland*, p. xii)

British overseas expansion here is given the aura of a religious crusade. One wonders in this context what the relationship was between

burgeoning British imperialism and the increasing popularity of the mediaeval crusades as poetic subject matter, a popularity reflected most clearly in Canada by Breakenridge's *The Crusades, and Other Poems*, published in 1846. Did the spatial expansion of British consciousness naturally stimulate a coincident temporal expansion, or was the past searched for analogies which might justify the present? Whatever the motivation, it seems to have been common to Canada as well.

An added fillip of self-pride might also have influenced British settlers in Canada. They, after all, could point to themselves as major characters, if not heroes, in the drama of imperialistic expansion. (Alternatively, of course, their need for self-justification, if there was such need, would also be more intense than for those at home in Britain.) Either motivation, and perhaps even both simultaneously, might have inspired William Pope's following praise of the British as unsurpassed settlers:

> As Colonists they stand confessed,
> Most enterprising and the best:
> Hardy, robust, inured to toil,
> They cultivate the grateful soil,
> Till desert wilds beneath their hand
> Become like Goshen's fertile land.
> Commercial like their parent state,
> Whose entgerprize they emulate,
> Just laws and institutions free,
> Proclaim them sons of liberty.
> (*Reminiscences of Prince Edward Island*, p. 17)

Pope's vision, with its emphasis on commerce and political liberty, is more mundane than that of Miss Prescott with its religious and moral implications, but the fundamental aim of both was to praise the mother country.

Breakenridge also composed a paean of praise to Britain for her particular accomplishments in settling Canada, in transforming that land into a useful and productive area:

> But chief for thee my lay her muse designs,
> Fair land of ocean-lakes and towering pines;
> Thee, Canada! the Briton's second home
> When fortune tempts him from his first to roam;
> And thou art blest in Britain's fostering care,
> That fain would see thee great, as thou art fair!
> Shielded by her, behold thy sons around,
> Their labours with success securely crowned;
> See woods and swamps transformed by magic toil;
> Here cities rise - there golden harvests smile:
> Nor boast we less that learning holds her sway
> Where howling wilds once stretched across the way.
> (*The Crusades, and Other Poems*, p. 138)

In this fragment, Britain is indeed the beneficent mother country nourishing her offspring and urging it protectively towards its own measure of greatness.

Other poets also regarded Britain as the maternal guarantor of Canadian freedom. M. Ethelind Sawtell hailed the English flag as the symbol of ideal freedom:

> We will be free! we will be free!
> Our struggle nought deter -
> As free as is the *native breeze*
> Which England's banners stir.
> (*The Mourner's Tribute*, p. 182)

John Galt, in reaction to an "ignominious attack on Canada by a gang of Thieves and Burglars" was moved to an impassioned proclamation that Britain was the domicile of all that was just, secure, and free on earth:

> Britannia! glory of the earth!
> Serene, sublime, determined stand;
> Whate'er of wisdom shows in worth,
> Be ever thine, God-gifted land!

Boon of the world, like life and light,
Where Liberty's the slave of Right.

Law, child of Right, still reign in thee,
And Justice, joined with Mercy, smile
Before her throne; security
Will then reward thy aims and toil:
That, that alone, can freedom give,
For but the safe in freedom live.
(*The Demon of Destiny*, p. 44)

Canada's freedom, Galt felt, rested in the security provided by Britain.

The last few quotations portray Britain as the great ideal among nations in such a way as to suggest that she herself remained blissfully untouched by the vulgar workings of the world. William Kirby[32], on the other hand intensified his argument for Britain's moral and ethical supremacy by dwelling on the severe cost to the English of their salvation of the world from Napoleonic tyranny:

Sad price for freedom saved, yet needful paid,
When half the world to Gaul's submission made,
And ravaged Europe torn and mangled lay
Th' Imperial soldier's vile dishonoured prey.
England alone, behind whose bulwarks ran
The vestal virtues, and the hopes of man,
From first to last, maintained the holy cause
Of justice, liberty and social laws.
Through years accursed to strife she fought and bled,
Her best and bravest numbered with the dead,
Spent her estate, and risked her very name,
To save the world from tyranny and shame.
And when th' Imperial captive borne in chains
Left peace at length on Europe's trampled plains,
It came unblessing; for succeeding years
From war entailed the nation's deep arrears,
And want and suffering scourged th' exhausted land
Till peace seemed worse than war and harder to withstand.[33]

We have returned to the depiction of Britain as martyr, but to a depiction of greater intensity than that of Henrietta Prescott.

Since these poems are largely representative of a regard for

Britain possessed by an ever-increasing number of settlers in Canada, it is not surprising that this period also contained the preponderance of exile verse written in Canada in the first hundred years of English settlement. Most of this verse was elegiac, lamenting the land left behind, and declaring an undying fidelity to the home which no new land could ever replace:

> Land of my birth, and of my sires,
> Hail to thy sea beat shores!
> Hail to thy cliffs, thy beacon fires,
> Thy vallies, fields, and bowers.
>
> Far in a distant land I roam,
> But still my heart recurs to thee,
> Thou art my country, once my home,
> Land of the fair, the brave, and free.
>
> . . .
>
> Oh England! can I e'er forget
> The land whence first I drew my breath?
> My Country! no! I love thee yet
> I'll love thro' life and still till death.
> (*Hallowell Free Press*, July 21, 1834)

The emphasis upon the past in this poem is typical of exile poetry in general. A strong sense of time's threatening rapidity seems to have been the major motivation of such verse. The reality of spatial exile undoubtedly intensified this sense, but it is the feeling of temporal exile which strikes one most upon reading poems like the one above, and the one below by Mrs. Moodie:

> The music of our native shores,
> A thousand lovely scenes endears;
> In magic tones it murmurs o'er
> The visions of our early years;
> The love of youth.
> It wreaths again the flowers we wreathed
> In childhood's bright, unclouded day;
> It breathes again the vows we breathed
> At fancy's shrine, when hopes were gay,
> And whispered truth.

It calls before our mental sight
Dear friends, whose tuneful lips are mute;
Sweet, sunny eyes, long closed in night,
Warm hearts, now silent as the lute
Which charmed our ears.
It thrills the breast with feelings deep,
Too deep for language to impart;
It bids the spirit joy or weep
In tones which sink into the heart,
And melt in tears.
(*Literary Garland*, Jan. 1844, p. 14)

Here the nostalgia is evoked for the loss of youth and its associations as much as it is for the loss of a particular physical or national environment.

Scottish immigrants, who composed a large percentage of Canada's exile verse, did retain in their expressions a strong sense of spatial exile. They frequently did lament their separation from a particular geographical or national unit which they continued to regard as home. The writer of the following lines was presumably moved to utter them as a result of gazing upon Canadian scenery, though that experience seemed to have exerted little or no influence upon the import of his verses:

O where is that Briton so dead to all feeling,
Though fortunes bright beams on his destiny smile,
(When his heart its most secret desires revealing,)
Will sigh not again for his own native Isle.

For the name of his country is dear to the stranger,
Where'er he may wander, whatever his doom,
Though by troubles assail'd and surrounded by danger,
His heart like the needle still turns to his home.
(*Literary Garland*, Apr. 1839, p. 220)

The call of home transcends both good fortune and bad according to this writer, and his diction ("Britain," "the name of his country") clearly suggests that he conceived of home as a geo-political entity.

Many of these expressions of exile undoubtedly were the product of intense emotional longings, but the hyperbole in their presentation tends to relegate them largely to the insubstantial world of romantic, sentimental fancy, especially for the contemporary reader, and to prompt the reflection that some of these writers were not composing out of anguished emotion, but were adhering to a convention. After all, English poets such as Mrs. Hemans and Laetitia E. Landon were also indulging at that time and before in the composition of sentimental exile poetry.

More convincing and more realistic is the realization put forth by J. Ramsey[34] in his "Flight of Fancy" that one can never go back again, that the exile's longing is fruitless because it is temporal to a large extent and time inevitably destroys its ideals:

> Your bonnie lines, an' cowe o' heather,
> Made my auld heart as licht 's a feather;
> Sae off on fancy's wings I flew,
> My native glen ance mair to view.
> I thought it early morn in May -
> Month o' the year maist blythe an' gay,-
> I lighted on the warlocke knowe,
> Where stunted bushes only grow;
> Then I had full within my view,
> Baith crystal an' mountains blue;
> The lambies bleatin' on the hill,
> Some sporting - loupin' o'er the rill;
> The mavis perched on thorny spray,
> In blythe notes welcomed in the day;
> The linties on the whinnie brae,
> Sent down their streams o' melody.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> But a' my early friends were gane,
> Some laid aneath the sod or stane;
> Some perished on the stormy main;
> But maist were in the battle slain.
> The few that live were far awa,
> "Pursuing fortunes slidd'ry ba'."
> The Glen being lanely noo to me,

The tear-drap fillin' fast my e'e,
I shook frae aff my wings the dew,
Flew back to tell my waes to you.
(*Literary Garland*, Jan. 1849, p. 39)

Still, the memory itself may be the positive thing and not any actual return to the old land. And this memory will have greater solidity, greater security, if it is a memory of the land rather than a memory of such "perishables" as people and artifacts. This, at least, is the implication of Joseph Howe's following lines - lines which constitute one of the few extant expressions of a feeling of exile *from* Canada rather than *in* Canada:

For, though Acadia's sons may stray at times
To lands more fruitful, and to milder climes,
Still, though the flowers may richer odour breathe,
And, overhead, the vines their tendrils wreathe,
Though the Sun's constant and serenest ray
O'er scenes of beauty fondly loves to stray -
Though all that's fairest falls from Nature's hand,
The exile pines to tread his native land;
Her rocky mountains, and her wintry storms,
Her fertile valleys, and her lovely forms,
Crowd on the mind with dreams of mighty power,
And cheer his heart in many a lonely hour.
(*Nineteenth-Century Narrative Poems*, p. 41)

As exile poetry, Howe's expression was virtually unique, but his sentiment for Canada had significant poetic support from 1830 to 1851. Some views were not as positive as the above, however. Standish O'Grady's *The Emigrant* depicted the Canadian physical and social environment as oppressively difficult. O'Grady painted the landscape with particular gloom in the following passage:

The frozen lakes, the snow capt mountains drear,
The arctic sun that dims the circling year,
The night fast gathering ere chill morn appears,
That adds new mounts where snowy mounts upraise.
The pent up cottage, dreary, dank and sad,

The bending pine in snow white livery clad,
The new made precipice, the head long steep,
The fractured fragments of the frozen deep;
The way impervious to the eye,
That strives in vain fresh labyrinths to fly;
The steed more eager cheerless as they go,
Who sinks beneath accumulating snow,
The frozen friend ill fated to expire;
The youth the solace of his distant sire,
With all surrounding horrors of the sight
Exposed to perish 'neath the northern light,
Alike conspire to paint the dangerous gloom;
And keep your hardy venturous sons at home.
(*The Emigrant*, pp. 73-74)

He went on in subsequent passages to warn that Canada would not yield wealth ("A useless land a useless tract remains," p. 75), that even for subsistence arduous toil is necessary, and that Quebec is a province unfit in law and social custom for English-speaking immigrants. His attitude towards Canada West was marginally better with respect to society and politics but no better at all with respect to the land.

O'Grady's was the severest and almost the only negative estimation of Canada offered by a Canadian verse writer during the period under consideration. Most versifiers chose to present their new "homeland" in a more positive light. Naturally enough, what was regarded then as positive has sometimes come to be regarded now as negative. Such is the case of those praises of Canada as a kind of "young Britain," and visions of its future as the culmination of British aims and the fulfilment of British glory. The verses below refer to Nova Scotia in this fashion, prophesying a great future for the province as a consequence of careful cultivation by the mother country:

(The sucker from the lordly oak,
Looks weak and wan beneath its sire,
But shielded there from the tempest stroke,
From chilling flood, or solar fire:

It happy grows, not all unlike,
Nor all unworthy its proud stem,
To the same dye its leaflets strike,
And looks mid weeds and flowers a gem.

And still the parent's verdant shield,
Filters the rain drops and the ray:
Blessings too fierce on open field,
Tempered - around its offspring play.

'Twill be one day its parent's pride,
The shade of tribes that walk the earth,
Birds sing, mid its arms abide,
And men group round for wit and mirth.)

So, may our infant state aspire,
Neath England's shield, neath England's ray,
Blest with a portion of the fire,
Which gives the Island Queen her day,

Go on young Britain - climbing still,
Undaunted to meridian height,
Retreat is rife with shame and ill,
Fame sits above enthroned in light.
(*Halifax Monthly Magazine*, Oct. 1830, pp. 199-200)

In the reference to Nova Scotia as an "infant state," a distinct political unit in other words, there is a meagre suggestion of an incipient Canadian nationalism. Simultaneously the poem's insistence upon the great debt owed by colony to mother country rigidly subjugates any potential sense of future autonomy.

Most Canadian versifiers of this period were less qualified in their expressions of attraction to the new land. They praised the land unreservedly, and their praise was sometimes directed towards the material utility of the land as well as to its natural beauty. William Pope, for example, provided a late echo of John Hayman in his brief but extravagant claims for the material benefits of Prince Edward Island:

No land can boast more rich supply,
That e'er was found beneath the sky;

Nor purer streams have ever flowed,
Since heaven that bounteous gift bestowed.
(*Reminiscences of Prince Edward Island*, p. 9)

George Gillespie concurred, praising Canada for her "fertile fields and biggins braw," exhorting immigrants

To sow the fields, the wood-lands smash,
And live like kings.
For here, if managed weel, there's routh
O' food for many a distant mouth,
Wi' waters pure to quench their drouth
And float their gear
(*Miscellaneous Poems*, p. 36)

In another poem, Gillespie was even more explicit about Canada's material advantages:

This is a land o' milk and honey,
Whar many may live wi' little money;
As lairds and farmers fen and thrive,
Wi' taxes very sma' to strive;
Without a licence shoot like wud
Birds o' ilk kind wi' blattering thud -
Ye pap a ball right through a deer,
Nor e'en the leave o' ony speer;
Advantages you brawly ken
Envied by British gentlemen.
(*Ibid.*, p. 47)

Canadians may have possessed little of the sense of a new Eden which their neighbours to the South seem to have cultivated, but the opening line of this passage hints at something of a Promised Land outlook on the part of some Canadian writers.

The beauty of the Canadian landscape made most impact upon the poetic consciousness of her writers after 1830, as evidenced by the plethora of verse which they created in praise of that beauty during this period. Again we can cite Gillespie:

Yes! lovely the land of the poplar and pine,
Where the maple trees flourish, and wild shoots the vine:

Where the sun-flower prolific is every where seen,
The holy-hock, shumac, and bright scarlet-bean.
Oh! rich is the foliage the woods that array,
And charming the plumage their inmates display,
That sweet little wanderer, the humming-bird bright,
Here to flaunt in the sun's fervid beam takes delight;
His home for a period he makes of these bowers,
Fond sipping the fragrance and sweets of the flowers.
How charmed in the silence of noon I have strayed,
And the woodpecker's beautiful plumage surveyed;
Whil'st Echo his strokes through the woods made resound,
And the chipmunk familiar, frisk'd playful around,
While the walnuts prolific, adorning the trees,
Ripe, rapped to the ground at the kiss of each breeze:
And, oh! what for grandeur in season may vie
With the beautiful tints of a Canada sky.
(*Ibid.*, p. 9)

Gillespie went on in this poem to compare Canada favourably with Italy, and in several other poems in this same volume he repeated his praise of the Canadian landscape. (See especially "Lines Written on Passing Malden," p. 87, and "Canadian Summer Evening," p. 112.)

Joseph Howe's expression of love for his homeland in the poem *Acadia* was motivated in some degree by the physical attractions of that land:

Pearl of the West - since first my soul awoke
And on my eyes thy sylvan beauties broke,
Since the warm current of my youthful blood
Flow'd on, thy charms, of mountain, mead, and flood,
Have been to me most dear.
(*Nineteenth-Century Narrative Poems*, p. 19)

In both Howe and Gillespie it is clear that the praise of Canada's natural beauties was an early form of patriotic or "nationalistic" feeling.

A similar sentiment was expressed by Susanna Moodie in several of her descriptive poems - most overtly in the poem below, entitled "The Maple Tree" and subtitled "A Song for Canada":

HAIL to the pride of the forest - hail!
To the maple stout and green;
The treasure it yields, shall never fail
While leaves on its boughs are seen.
When the moon shines bright,
On the wintry night,
And silvers the frozen snow,
And echo dwells,
On the lingring bells,
As the sleighs dart to and fro;
Then it brightens the mirth,
Of the social hearth,
With its red and cheering glow.

. . .

Hurra! for the sturdy maple tree!
Long may its green branch wave;
In native strength sublime and free
Meet emblem for the brave -
And a nation's peace,
With its growth increase,
And its worth be widely spread;
For it lifts not in vain,
To the sun and rain,
Its tall majestic head -
May it grace our soil,
And reward our toil,
'Till the nation's heart is dead.
(*Literary Garland*, Apr. 1849, p. 214)

The word "nation" as it is used in the last verse probably did not signify for Mrs. Moodie an autonomous political unit (as it commonly does for most people who use the word today), but it did connote at least a distinct geographical entity, and it is from this latter realization that nationalistic sentiments later arose.

However pronounced her own feeling of exile from England, Mrs. Moodie nevertheless consistently turned her attention to the character and affairs of her adopted land. She was fond of using the word "Canadian" in the titles of her poems, as, for example, in her two pastorals "Canadian Hunter's Song" and "The Fisherman's Light; A Canadian Song," published together in the February 1843 issue of the

Literary Garland (p. 63), and although the woodland life described in each is idyllic, it is nonetheless distinctly Canadian.

It is significant too that, in both of the poems mentioned immediately above, Mrs. Moodie celebrated modes of existence which were essentially primitive, even if simultaneously pastoral. Mrs. Moodie recognized an inevitable contradiction between the championing of the Canadian landscape as a basis for patriotic feeling, and the desire, partly motivated by the same patriotic feeling, to build a prosperous society in that landscape. Her poetic voice seems clearly to have preferred the relatively primitive modes of existence to the civilized. The two poems to which we have just referred verge on the elegiac, and this undertone became the dominant mood for Mrs. Moodie's "The Otonabee":

I love thee, lonely river!
  Thy hollow restless roar,
  Thy cedar girded shore,
The rocky isles that sever,
  The waves that round them pour -
Katchawanook basks in light,
  But thy currents woo the shade
  By the lofty pine trees made,
That cast a gloom like night,
  Ere day's last glories fade.
Lament, lament wild river!
  A hand is on thy mane,
  That will bind thee in a chain,
No force of thine can sever.

Thy solitary voice -
  The same bold song that sung,
  When Nature's frame was young,
No longer may rejoice,
  The woods where erst it sung -
In murmurs soft and lone,
  Thy furious headlong tide
  Is destined yet to glide,

To meet the lake below -
And many a bark shall ride,
Securely on thy breast,
To waft across the main,
Rich stores of golden grain,
From the vallies of the west.
(*Literary Garland*, May, 1839, p. 275)

There were many Canadian versifiers who did not share Mrs. Moodie's concern for the incursions of civilization upon nature. Some, indeed, regarded Canada's urban growth, even at this early period, as a positive sign of the country's maturation. Toronto, especially, was singled out for praise in this regard. John Rumsey pronounced Toronto to be the perfect community to serve as the capital of the country (in 1843, before, in fact, there was any country to be capital of):

Nor is there earthly situation
So perfect fitted for the station
Of making Canada a people,
As where you spy St. James's steeple,
By slightest knowledge 'twill be seen,
That brave TORONTO'S always been
A place of note, and high renown.
(*Curiae Canadenses*, p. 30)

In 1846, William Kirby proclaimed that Toronto was unexcelled by other Canadian cities in the combination of her natural setting and her commercial, academic and judicial leadership:

Now in the distance, o'er the placid lake
Toronto's uplands the horizon break.
Her spires and turrets tipt with morning rays,
Loom clearly forth above the misty haze,
That sheets her noble bay, and hides her strand,
Rich with the commerce of the Western land.
In academic groves, there Learning draws
Our generous youth to study Wisdom's laws,
To fill their quivers full of arrows bright
And arm them for life's coming arduous fight.
There, Legislation holds her high debate;
And Freedom stands the guardian of the State;
In spotless ermine, Justice sits supreme,

And lifts the scales of law with even beam.
While rich in future hopes, in memories past,
Toronto's glorious destiny is cast;
'Mid rival cities of our land I ween
Is hers the Crown, and she the rightful Queen.
(*Nineteenth-Century Narrative Poems*, p. 108)

No other Canadian city fared as well in verse as did Toronto during this period. Montreal received occasional mention, and even that was not always flattering, while the Maritime writers seem on the whole not to have regarded their urban centres as proper material for poetry.

The name "Canada" was beginning to exert itself upon the imagination of the poets. What they encompassed within that name, however, is not always clear. Maritimers did not use the title nearly as often as did the writers of Canada East and Canada West, and it is possible that the name was meant to apply almost strictly to these latter two regions. Even so, and more importantly, when "Canada" was mentioned, intimations and intonations of "country" rather than "colony" began to be sensed. These intonations can be heard in the following laudatory lines from a poem entitled "Ode to Canada":

Hail land of bliss, thou guardian of the west!
The poor man's home, the rich man's place of rest!
Thy air is health, and wafts to all unspent;
The breath of freedom mingled with content.

No slavish realms with thee can e'er compare;
Slaves cannot breathe who taste thy liquid air;
Freedom exhales with every breath we draw,
And walks upheld by virtue and by law;
Nature exclaims whilst pointing to her throne,
Behold the land that freedom calls her own;
Thy cheerful villas rise the pride of art,
Thy manly sons are brave and kind of heart;

Proud science hails the splendor of the sight,
Bursts chains of vice and gives to darkness light.
The name of Wolf [sic], Canadian breasts inspire,

. . . .

O! thou most awful being, mighty cause!
Eternal one, who gives to nature laws;
Whose mighty finger rolls the seasons round;
Winds up the wheels, makes light and life abound;
To thee I bow, - O hear a suppliant's pray'r,
Make this the land of thy paternal care!
(*Canadian Casket*, June 16, 1832)

The praise here is directed to various dimensions of Canadian existence and is sufficiently extravagant to seem non-colonial in focus. The last line, especially, suggests that the writer may have possessed some expectations of future nationhood for Canada.

Several verse writers, in fact, predicted a great future for Canada. Henry Scadding,[35] in his prize poem "Emigration," recited at Upper Canada College in 1832, consoled settlers with the prophecy that the new land would eventually supplant the old to achieve primacy in all significant areas of existence:

Yes! weary though ye be, lorn pilgrim band!
Ye shall be call'd the patriarchs of the land:
When Europe's pomp and splendor are no more -
When her sons live but in the minstrel's lore,
Your foster-home will rise th' ascendant star,
Perfect in arts, in genius rich, in war -
(*Canadian Literary Magazine*, Apr. 1833, p. 15)

Mrs. Moodie similarly insisted that Canada would one day be a significant world leader:

Joy! to Canada's unborn heirs,
A deathless heritage is theirs;
For sway'd by wise and holy laws,
Her voice shall aid the world's great cause -
Shall plead the rights of man, and claim
For humble worth an honest fame; -

Shall show, the peasant-born can be,
When call'd to action, great and free,
Like worm within the flint conceal'd,
By stern necessity reveal'd;
Kindles to life the stupid clod -
Image of perfect man and God!
(*Victoria Magazine*, Sept. 1847, p. 3)

The writers of the above poems all chose to employ hyperbole in the praise of Canada, thus fitting themselves to the pattern of patriotic verse-writing in general. A. J. Williamson pursued a different tack. His verses convey no less affection for Canada than those of the preceding poets, and promise as much for Canada's future, and they do so in a more realistic fashion:

Auld Scotia hills they live in sang;
An' Albion's chalky cliffs sae free;
An' Erin wi' her tantrums, lang
Has drain't the walls o' Poesie.
We hae nae Byrons, Burns' nor Moores,
To chant her praise as it should be;
But tact or name, the *will* is ours,
Sae here's a stave for CANADIE.

She has nae ancient fame to boast,
A wee bit bairn on nature's knee;
Tho' *some fouk* ken it to their cost,
When ruffl't she can scart a wee.
And yet its no a trade she likes;
She'll aye lat be, for fair lat be;
Yer grumsom' an' yer feghtin' tykes,
Lord keep awa' frae CANADIE.

Tho' young in years, she grows apace;
A cent'ry mair, an' syne ye'll see;
Amang the nations sic a face,
'll no be dasht by contumely.
Then Albion's, Erin's, Scotia's sons;
A bumper toast an' fill it hie: -
"While Lowrie" to the Ocean runs,
Prosperity to CANADIE.
(*Original Poems on Various Subjects*, pp. 128-130)

Williamson's slightly comic tone, abetted by his use of the Scottish

dialect, makes his patriotism seem more sincere and more credible than the preceding hyperbolic effusions.

The comic muse, however, made relatively little impact upon Canadian verse in the period from 1830 to 1851. That major characteristic of Lower Canadian verse in the 1820's was relegated to a much less significant role thereafter. Satire diminished as the quantity of social verse diminished. The Canadian poet composed, as has been seen, a quantity of political poetry but otherwise he seems to have paid comparatively little attention to his social environment.

A few bits of satire were directed at the medical profession, indicating the general suspicion with which society still viewed its doctors. The *Canadian Magazine* mocked them by printing a poem which depicted two doctors terrorized in the city streets by a ghost (a former patient) who beat them and stole their hats and cloaks. When the doctors were first confronted by the headless spirit they were confounded:

> Another read Hippocrates,
> And Celsus, leaf by leaf;
> And prov'd that men who have'nt heads,
> Are sometimes blind and deaf.
> (*Canadian Magazine*, Mar., 1833, p. 273)

This indictment of doctors concluded:

> They say in them [the doctors' hats and cloaks] he
> walks the street,
> So if your way is cross'd,
> By brainless quack, without a head,
> Be sure you've met the ghost.
> (*Ibid.*, p. 274)

John Breakenridge, in a lengthy satire entitled "The Golden Age" published under the pseudonym "Claud Halcro" in the *Literary*

Garland, also levelled a blast against the medical profession. He singled out for attack the growing community of druggists and was specific in his references to their individual remedies as is shown by the topicality of the following passage:

> O! age of pills, asperients, salve and balm,
> How dost thou dally with us, and then damn!'
> Of old, the Alchymist, with wond'rous lore.
> Of Drugs and Chemicals prepared his store;
> Then sought to find the Philosophic stone,
> But sought in vain, for it from earth had flown!
> Triumphant DRUGGISTS! - *ye* have won the palm;
> The stone is found - and all its "gold" is "balm!"
> Pills in a deluge flood the earth amain;
> Like pattering hail, that mingles with the rain
> They fall! Elixir's vivifying flood
> Pours o'er the land, and animates our blood
> Celestial sure they are, for *Dr. Lin*
> Diana's cousin-german - Mandarin,
> And Leech of Howqua's far famed chop-stick land,
> Leaves the Celestial Empire, Pills in hand!
> O! Heaven descended "blood pills" may ye give
> Your name the lie - nor sanguinary live!
> O! never ending Pills each page - each book
> Ye fill, from Mister Norton's down to *Snook*!
>
> . . .
>
> O! Beatific Age! let me proclaim
> Thy healthful virtues - though the Doctor's blame!
> Ye shades of Fielding and of Smollet, hear!
> No longer at the world of Doctors sneer!
> For they are fallen - the Homicidal race!
> But *anthropophagi* supply their place!
> (*Literary Garland*, Jan. 1845, p. 37)

George Gillespie also gave an indication of prevailing conditions in rural Canadian education when he composed "The Canadian Dominie's Lament." The tone is quite bitter but the details of the following portion of the poem have the ring of truth about them:

> The bairns are afash, their capacities dull,
> Opposed toward letters seems each stupid skull;
> My lugs a' day lang are confused wi' their din,
> To pain them their parents consider it sin;

My salary's dubious, my labours are sure,
The prospect before me's an unco bare muir;
My pupil's are stubborn, not easily tamed,
For their misdemeanours by parents I'm blamed,
Who often are boorish, unsocial, and prone
To think there are few like themselves and their own.
(*Miscellaneous Poems*, p. 74)

Gillespie's teacher longed for the relative civilization of Toronto, but finally surrendered his occupation of educator for that of bush-worker, an exchange which was probably not at all uncommon in pioneer Canada.

Comments upon more specialized areas of education than the above were almost non-existent in Canadian verses of the time, but James Haskins proves the exception to the rule, with this comic slur in Byronic rhyme against the study of philology:

PHILOLOGY's a noble thing, no doubt;
Tho' useless oft, like many another 'ology;
(The which to prove I'll mention but *astrology*.)
In fact, I'd rather be an eel, or trout -
Or live out all my days within a hollow tree;
Than to be deluged, from a leaden spout,
With endless histories of every word
We speak: which plan if any choose to follow, he
May, for my part; with some small blame incurred.
Give me the knowledge - never bought too dear -
Which makes us better, wiser abler men:
But long discussions, as to *where* and *when*
Such and such tongues were spoken - I can't bear.
I would not give an onion's cast-off tunic,
For all the grubbed-up roots of Erse, Phenician, Runic.
(*The Poetical Works of James Haskins*, pp. 296-297)

Haskins' poem is interesting in that it states a preference for education based upon a concept of moral utility; moral vision dominated his society.

This moral vision invaded the world of social criticism. A.

J. Williamson explicitly condemned the immorality of gold-seekers in his poem "Auri Sacra Fames":

> Next to the swinish multitude,
> Who fan their own distress,
> 'Till sloth and poverty subdued,
> They wither in excess,
> Are they whose poor ambition seeks
> The many thousand fold
> Of interest, or a curse that speaks: -
> The worshippers of GOLD!
>
> Oh! what shall he be liken'd to,
> Whose narrow soul conceives
> No pleasure in the heav'nly dew,
> That thirsty plants receive;
> Who gratifies a grov'lling lust,
> In filthiness untold,
> By gath'ring heaps of sordid dust,
> Altho' that dust be GOLD!
>
> Concentrated within himself,
> His ev'ry sense absorb'd,
> In the rank heaps of damning pelf; -
> A winter moon full orb'd; -
> He may reflect a borrow'd shine,
> But ah! the rays are cold;
> One spotless thread of light divine
> Is worth a world of GOLD!
> (*British American Journal*, Jan. 22, 1835)

The thrust of Williamson's criticism here is directed primarily at individuals and is very much concerned with the quality of their spiritual lives, but that criticism has a generalized social application as well. The first verse especially evokes the social context, and implies, in fact, a very unflattering picture of society.

Williamson seems to have conceived of society as consisting of corrupt individuals - of fallen man. Some other writers saw society itself as the corrupter of a naturally benevolent humanity. This Rousseauistic conception is evident in Alexander M'Lachlan's poem

"The Spirit of Love," where it was overtly stated in the poem's opening lines:

> Society's every feature
> Proclaims treason against nature,
> And feeds the channels through which flow
> All human wretchedness and woe
> (*The Spirit of Love*, p. 4)

The poet went on in this very pessimistic narrative poem to denounce the human race for constantly failing to learn the lesson of love which nature was just as constantly proclaiming, and while M'Lachlan was clearly not as moralistic in a traditional sense as many of his fellow poets, his lament nevertheless possesses a moralistic tone.

Love was a subject which Canadian poets after 1830 treated in a very serious manner. To them it was a force possessing a great deal of positive power, and was therefore not to be treated in the light-hearted manner common to so many poems of the pre-1830 era, particularly in Lower Canada. M'Lachlan insisted that the heart was superior even to creeds, and an anonymous Maritime poet asserted that love was a divine principle which could give moral direction to life:

> Blest are the souls, whom love descends to bless!
> Happy the hearts which feed the sacred flame!
> Which makes each action of the life confess,
> And every thought bear witness to the same .
> Witness the truth and help it to prevail,
> That love is not confined to time or place, -
> That 'tis a life that death cannot assail, -
> That 'tis divine in origin and grace.
> A virtue - ranked supreme above the rest,
> A lovely power, pursuing and pursued, -
> Through which alone are men or angels blest;
>
> . . .
>
> It is the curb of temper, - end of strife,
> The genuine religion of the heart, -
> It is the precious cordial of our life,
> Which courage doth, - and purest zeal impart.
>
> . . .
>
> (*The Pearl*, Sept. 30, 1837)

Many other poets made similar claims for love. William A. Stephens announced that love in conjunction with hope made "our earth a blooming heaven" (*Hamilton*, p. 168). James Holmes rhapsodized that "one hour of Love is worth ages of Fame" (*Literary Garland*, Aug. 1840, p. 429). A certain "Augustus Nipcheese" proclaimed the joys of domestic love to be unsurpassed:

> Domestic love, thou soul-endearing sound!
> What heavenly raptures in thy joys are found!
> What bliss extatic, what angelic peace -
> Thine are the joys which possession but increase.
> (*Literary Garland*, Jan. 1841, p. 71)

The poet's pseudonym unfortunately undercut the sincerity of his hyperbolic sentiment, but it is a sentiment with which Joseph Howe concurred:

> Oh! Love, in stately dome, or princely bower,
> Man owns thy holy soul-subduing power,
> Feels that the sweetest charm his spirit knows
> From thy unsullied, sacred fountain, flows;
> For Splendour sheds a cold and cheerless glare
> If Love diffuse no ray of gladness there;
> But, if you have a still more precious charm,
> A smile more lovely, or a ray more warm,
> Oh! it is that which finally lingers o'er
> The rude and lowly cabins of the poor.
> (*Nineteenth-Century Narrative Poems*, p. 40)

With this confirmation we can perhaps regard Nipcheese's expression as being without satirical intent.

A natural concomitant of this generally exalted view of the powers of love, romantic and domestic, was an equally exalted regard for woman. In elaborate compliments, of which the following is typical, woman was depicted as a semi-divine being whose beauty and purity were designed by a benevolent creator to lead man to spiritual salvation:

> Woman, dear Woman! - in thy magic name
> There is a charm which wakens every thought,

Hallow'd and pure as is the sacred flame
That burns on vestal Altars, - there is nought
In this dull round of being but were tame
Without thee, tho' with richest splendours fraught,
And dark, unrapt in all thy charmful dreaming -
Star of our souls! - forever o'er thee beaming.

Gift of the Godhead! - when we gaze upon
Thy mantling beauty, purity, and love,
The swelling soul bows to th' Almighty one
Who formed thee in thine excellence above
Aught of his works that brighten 'neath the Sun
Whose glory lights the world in which we move;
Fram'd in the skies, boon of celestial birth,
Last and most precious to the sons of earth.
(*Scraps and Sketches*, p. 61)

Hyperbolic though this certainly is in one sense, one must also point out that in another sense woman is here definitely being assigned a role secondary to that of man, since her worth was defined in this poet's eyes by what benefit she could be to man. The poem below rectifies this imbalance somewhat by comparing male and female to the obvious denigration of the former and simultaneous elevation of the latter. Man is equated with woman's mere, ephemeral, physical charms:

Like slaves they obeyed her in height of power;
But left her all in her wintry hour:
And the cowards that swore for her love to die,
Shrunk from the tone of her last faint sigh.
- And this is Man's fidelity.

'Tis WOMAN alone, with a purer heart,
Can see all those idols of life depart,
And love the more, and smile and bless
Man in his uttermost wretchedness.
(*Canadian Emigrant*, Sept. 14, 1833)

The emphases of these two poems differ but a moralistic undertone pervades both. A similar spirit informed most of the "romantic" verse of this period. It is evident in Thomas MacQueen's[36] "The Melody of Sound" which praises at length the various melodic beauties of nature,

of thunder-storms, ocean waves, tempests, waterfalls, and birds, and which climaxes with the following statement of the surpassing beauty, and spiritual utility, of woman's voice:

> But ah! there is a sweeter sound
> That trembles on the ear,
> Like melody from other worlds,
> Which dullest souls must hear.
> It wraps the lewd in reverend awe,
> Bids drooping hearts rejoice,
> It soothes the ruthless tyrant's wrath,
> *'Tis the sound of Woman's voice!*
> (*Victoria Magazine,* June 1848, p. 223)

MacQueen, typical of the time, noted the sexual dimension of male-female relationships only in order to repudiate it. In addition, he and his fellow poets acknowledged feminine sensuality in ways so indirect and so muted as to be barely apprehended by the reader. The sentimental predilections of the period's poetry was especially evident in these poems about love and woman, and could be particularly cloying, as in Edward Mandeville's[37] "Woman's Smile":

> Oh! sweeter far than all the luscious fruits
> That grow 'neath glittering skies and sunny climes,
> Where pillared temples rear their gorgeous domes,
> And beauty basks in verdant plains, and moonlight
> Sheds its glorious beams o'er sea and land,
> Is the smile that kindness wreathes round woman's lip;
> The smile that glitters most in sorrow's hour,
> When friends long loved, long tired, have passed away,
> And left us plunged in irksome gloom and woe -
> Then, then, indeed, is woman's smile the balm
> That heals the wound and cheers the heavy heart:
> And shimmers thro' the rayless night
> Of cold and dreamy sorrow.
> Oh, then, how sweet!
> (*Literary Garland,* Feb. 1844, p. 62)

Sentimental though the praises of love and of woman tended to be, the darker verse of rejected and separated lovers, and of unrequited romantic admiration was more so, and more oppressive as well:

Lady! hast thou not seen my timid eye,
On meeting thine, in haste deprest?
And then hast thou not heard the broken sigh
Extorted from my wretched breast?

And thou hast surely often known appear
When I have vainly tried to speak,
In my dejected eye the trembling tear,
And mark'd it creeping down my cheek.

I need not, Lady, say the sigh reveals,
My soul too fondly clings to thee,
And yet the tear that from my eye-lid steals
Can prove that hope ne'er gladdens me.
(*Canadian Emigrant*, Dec. 1, 1831)

Lamentations of disappointed love easily become accusations of feminine heartlessness and this transformation occurred occasionally in the Canadian poetry of the period. In the verses below, the persona attacks his love for her infidelity and implicitly adopts an attitude of moral superiority:

I thought you an angel, I lov[illegible], I ador'd you,
I thought, and I fondly wish'd never to part,
But now that I know you, alas I must scorn you,
I know that you have not that thing call'd a heart.

Your blandishing smiles thrown so artful around me,
Made me think thee too good and too pure to deceive;
But you've broken the spell for an instant that bound me,
And woman again I can never believe.
(*Reminiscences of a Soldier*, p. 88)

The incident was made to seem particular, but the conclusion of this last verse utters a general indictment of the female sex.

Romantic motivations did not produce the only attacks upon woman in Canadian poetry between 1830 and 1851, but they did produce the only attacks in which an unrelieved severity of tone was employed. When woman was attacked on other grounds, the comic voice was used. This occurred infrequently, however, and it is an odd fact that the

writer who mocked woman was often female herself. For example, Mrs. H. Silvester[38] comically attacked feminine garrulity in her poem "An Accidental Truth":

> A maiden lady, who had gained, at least,
> The age that maiden ladies never pass;
> Whose tongue - (perpetual motion!) - never ceased,
> Was playing off one night her usual farce;
> Thinking there was a chance to make a hit -
> (She nursed a viper when she eyed the wit) -
> "Ah! Sir," - she cried - "I know the envious say -
> 'The world grows worse, believe me, every day,'
> Yes, Sir, - 'that I'm illiberal and cross,
> To younger folks;' God knows, Sir, my meek mind,
> I love the dears -- and am, Sir, to my loss,
> Generally speaking, far too kind."
> "Sure that's the truth," - cried he - "needs not the seeking -
> 'Tis known you *are*, ma'am - *generally speaking*!
> (*Literary Garland*, Mar. 1840, p. 172)

The sonnet is not often used for narrative or comic purposes, but it has been made to satisfy these purposes quite adeptly in this instance.

The humour of Mrs. Silvester is all the more satisfying, due to the fact that, in the context of the period as a whole, by far the greatest number of poems were written on sober themes such as religion, God, death, and the rejection of this life for the next. In other words, what had been the dominant tone of early Maritime verse and a major characteristic of pre-1830 Upper Canadian verse, now became the predominant aspect of post-1830 Canadian verse. Regional distinctions were greatly subdued by this transformation, thereby contributing significantly to that essential unity of the poetry of the Maritimes and the Canadas upon which the present chapter is predicated.

Death was a major contributor to the sobriety of this verse. In some instances, the concern with death was assuredly the result of the

adherence to sentimental convention which delighted in eliciting tears for tragically separated but ever-faithful lovers. Death, in these cases, was usually both the cause of grief and the sign, even reward, of a virtuous, sincere love. Mrs. Moodie's 'Mary Hume - A Ballad" exemplifies this paradox:

> 'He will come tonight!" young Mary said,
> And checked the rising sigh;
> And gazed on the stars that o'er her head
> Shone out in the deep blue sky,
> 'Heaven speed his voyage! - tho' absent long,
> The painful vigil's o'er -
> The skies are clear - the breeze is strong -
> We meet to part no more!"
>
> While yet she spoke a sudden chill
> O'er her ardent spirit crept;
> A sad presentiment of ill -
> She turned away and wept.
> Far off the sigh of ocean stole -
> The sweeping of the sounding surge -
> In plaintive murmurs o'er her soul,
> Like wailing of a funeral dirge.
>
> And in the mind there is a tone
> Which whispers to her sinking heart -
> 'Mary we meet in death alone;
> In realms of bliss no more to part."
> The moon has sunk in her ocean cave,
> Fled are the shades of night,
> And morning bursts on the purple wave
> In floods of golden light.
>
> The sudden stroke of the village bell
> Checks the fisher's song;
> He pauses to hear how rock and fell
> Its sullen tones prolong.
> "Some soul to its last account has sped:
> Dost thou hear that solemn sound?"
> "'Tis Mary Hume!" - his comrade said -
> "Last night her love was drowned!"
> (*Literary Garland*, Dec. 1843, p. 568)

Sentimental conventions could not account, however, for the frequency with which Canadian versifiers expressed longings for death.

The difficult and uncertain life of settlement probably exerted an influence here. At any rate, the pessimistic estimation of life and concomitant death-wish contained in the following lines were not exceptional:

> The aged man he is weary of life,
> And welcomes he the grave;
> And the warrior too, in battle's strife,
> Oh say not he is brave;
> For he's seeking relief from worldly care
> And fearless he courts destruction there.
> (*Canadian, British American and West Indian Magazine*, Feb. 1839, pp. 42-43)

The writer of these lines, as well as the many other versifiers of whom his attitude was characteristic, made death positive by emphasizing it as an escape from an intolerable existence. A religious concept may have been an underlying justification for their attitude but they did not specifically mention any such. Bishop G. J. Mountain did. In a poem entitled "Le Lac des Morts," he also presented death as a positive force but with a different emphasis than that of the above writers and within an explicitly Christian context:

> Lake of the dead - There is a lake
> Where men in second death expire:
> No hope they own, no respite take;
> It is, great God! a lake of fire.
>
> O there are means - eternal love
> Has found a ransom for the lost;
> He who in glory sits above
> Himself has paid the bloody cost.
>
> Look at your victim and revive;
> Look to your Lord and hear Him tell,
> I who was dead am now alive;
> I hold the keys of death and hell.
>
> On Him, on Him your hope be cast;
> On Him, the heart-struck sinner's friend;

> On Him, the first, on Him the last,
> Him the beginning, Him the end!
> (*Songs of the Wilderness*, pp. 1-5)

Mountain looked beyond the moment of death to consider the fact that it may be either absolutely positive or absolutely negative. In his poem, death is not an end in itself as it seemed to be in other poems; rather, in his missionary spirit, he was attempting to use it, especially through the symbol of Christ's sacrifice, as a stimulus to moral action in this life. The reward of such action would be a resurrection which would make death ~~positive, a~~ gateway to a new and better life, rather than simply a cessation of a present arduous and depressing existence. Mountain, of course, was not unique in his position, even in verse. His attitude was adopted in most eulogies of the period and in a few other poems treating death as a general topic, but it must also be noted that a great many other poems tended to present it, as in the examples above, ~~merely~~ as an escape.

Both the depiction of death as escape and as the gateway to a new and more positive existence, were founded upon a *contemptus mundi* attitude to the present world. And this latter was a theme frequently expressed in post-1830 Canadian verse. Writers were especially impressed by the ephemerality and mutability of all earthly things:

> Earth, at most, is but a sea
> Of death and mutability;
> Her fairest forms, tho' young, tho' gay,
> Contain the gangrene of decay.
> (M'Lachlan, *The Spirit of Love*, p. 6)

Natural beauty, they concluded, was in this context a vain and empty delusion:

I've culled the rose, and then with rapture gazed,
Upon its rich and beautiful attire;
Then lived upon the fragrance it infused
And felt a heavenly bliss my soul inspire.
With fondest pleasure would I love to view
Its silken coat, or trace its thousand veins;
Now and again admire its lovely hue,
And quaff afresh its sweetest odorous wines.
But now it fades and 'gins to drop away,
Its beauty gone - its odour too is lost;
Can that fair flower be subject to decay?
Alas! how vain in aught of earth to trust.

. . .

(*Victoria Magazine*, Aug., 1848, pp. 268-269)

Time in its inexorable passage was recognized as the unrelenting villain of this mortal world. Any reminder of time's passage was likely to elicit a poetic lament, such as the sound of the evening bell presumably did in the following instance:

It is too soon - I do not love
To hear so soon the solemn toll;
It tells how fast old Time can move,
How swiftly does his chariot roll
(*Canadian Casket*, Feb. 25, 1832)

Occasionally, the concern at time's rapid progression prompted, as in this excerpt, a small show of alarmed resistance. But just as frequently the response was a melancholic resignation to inevitability, as in the following poem by Daniel Haydn Mayne (possibly the first prose poem in the history of Canadian verse):

> Let us weep for yesterday, gone yesterday, that smiled so lovely as she poured the arrows done of her own day. Yesterday was all a lump of gold, bye and bye she faded, and the influence of a mighty power did change her gold. The flowers of yesterday bloom'd fair - to day I see withered leaves. Yesterday blessed my heart, - at night I sunk in sorrow. Yesterday; and I was in the world - to day I am deserted. Mother, brother, sisters, friends, where are you. Good bye with yesterday-farewell for ever.
>
> (*Poems and Fragments*, p. 54)

Human mortality seemed to be an overwhelming fact for these poets. Their awareness of the inherent restrictions of existence was oppressive to them. They saw reminders of the essential preciousness of human life in all worldly dimensions. Maritime writers were especially impressed with this lesson, seeing it constantly presented to them by the interaction of man and sea which was a pervasive reality of their lives:

> Of all the works of nature which imply
> Man's crawling weakness - 'tis this boasted sea;
> There he is cooped beneath the lowering sky, -
> Trusting for life to tiny planks, - for way
> To wind and tide - the merest cobweb'd fly
> Is not more helpless . . .
> (*Halifax Monthly Magazine*, Feb. 1831, pp. 337-338)

The echo of the blinded Gloucester's denunciation of life in *King Lear* ("As flies to wanton boys, are we to th' Gods; / They kill us for their sport"), indicates the emotional intensity that sometimes underlined and, in fact, inspired the Canadian verse writer's *contemptus mundi*.[40] And nowhere was this world weariness more vividly expressed than in A. J. Williamson's reflections upon the essential nature of man's innocent adolescence:

> Turn we the eye on envied YOUTH,
> Unveil'd before the glass of Truth;
> And what a hideous form is there,
> To worship with admiring stare!
> Dissimulation, malice, feud;
> Impiety, ingratitude;
> Lust, avarice, the desire of change,
> Invidious hatred, and revenge;
> Each vice imagin'd, and confess'd
> Indigenous to human breast;
> Alternate rules in that dark form,
> Trick'd and bedizen'd for the worm.
> If these be health's indubious signs,
> Whence hath disease her figural lines?
> (*Original Poems*, p. 88)

But Williamson's conclusion that life is a disease arose from a different emphasis than did his colleagues' concept of *contemptus mundi*. They saw man generally as a victim in the trap of life, while Williamson quite clearly understood man to be his own victim. Life did not define the quality of human existence; the quality of human existence defined life.

Either way, the poets ultimately agreed that there was little or no possibility of attaining any substantial happiness in the present world:

> Vain is the impassioned vow that fancy breathes
> For happiness below - the child of hope
> A while may saunter on the sunny slope
> And twine the wild flowers in fantastic wreaths
> Yet, ere he gain the mountain's arduous height,
> Nipt are their beauties by the chilling blast,
> And thorny wilds with midnight gloom o'ercast
> Burst in dread horror on his aching sight.
> (*Hallowell Free Press*, July 14, 1834)

Real happiness was reserved for the next life:

> Nought-nought on earth-thou knew'st full well-
> Thy yearnings deep could satisfy;-
> Here Man at best but dreams of bliss;-
> True Pleasure hath her home on high.-
> (*Literary Garland*, Feb. 1845, p. 64)

In this context, the Canadian poet's frequent evocation of God and religion is quite understandable. He clearly saw in them the only effective source of consolation for the despair prompted by his *contemptus mundi* convictions. Few were content with, or were able to sustain, a stoic perseverance. They needed more reassurance than this, and they apparently discovered it by asserting that an ultimate reward lay, not in the integral worth of the struggle of life itself, but in a goal

beyond that struggle. To the conventional Christian, and most of these writers were conventional Christians, the reward was companionship with God in heaven. They agreed with William Martin Leggett that "Life's great end" was "To soar the boundless sea of thought, / And up to Nature's God ascend!" (*The Forest Wreath*, p. 30).

They did not agree so thoroughly on the means by which this goal might be attained. A. J. Williamson adopted a Donne-like stance, insisting upon his fundamental human weakness and consequent inability to affect his own salvation:

> I cannot reach thee as I would,
> By worthlessness restrain'd,
> Yet, O! midst this intestine war,
> Thou know'st that I'm sincere;
> And tearful, seek a pilot star,
> From Folly's rocks to steer.
> (*Original Poems*, p. 14)

He demanded, therefore, again like Donne, that the mysterious Deity become the aggressive partner of the relationship by revealing Himself clearly to His supplicant and forcefully directing his life:

> INSCRUTABLE! Look down on me
> And listen to my prayer:
> Make me to look with *love* on thee,
> For this is all my care.
> I'm weary of this wretched plight,
> Unknowing where to fly;
> And *loathe* the damn'd unequal fight,
> With *hidden* Deity!
> (*Original Poems*, p. 20)

James Haskins was not nearly so vehement, but he indicated a measure of agreement with Williamson by suggesting that preaching was an absurd and sterile process unless God had already initiated salvation within the individual:

Till God's good spirit breathes on each dry bone;
And moulds anew the chaos of the breast:
Breaks up, and mollifies, that heart of stone;
And makes "the foolishness of preaching" blessed.
(*The Political Works . . .*, p. 124)

Once God had infused the desire for salvation within the soul, religion, in Dr. Haskin's opinion, became a very potent force:

Life of our life - Religion! on thy breast
How sweetly doth affliction sink to sleep,
How calmly can the soul, the spirit, rest!
E'en as the mariner an ocean deep
Looks toward the haven where he fain would be;
Thus from the stormy world I turn to thee,
Thou healer of the hearts that inly weep;
Oh! bring thy balm of blessedness to me!
Daughter of heaven! Oh! set my spirit free
From troubled thoughts which there commotion keep;
Come in thy beauty over the dark sea,
And let the light of love my beacon be.
Oh! do not - do not *now* refuse thine aid,
For I am lorn and sad-by mine own heart betray'd.
(*Literary Garland*, Oct. 1844, p. 468)

A sincere adherence to religion culminated, everyone agreed, in the attainment of immortality (the ultimate rejection of death, and of this unhappy present existence):

When age comes on if at the breast,
Religion's anchored fast;
We'll hail beyond a port of rest,
A happy home at last.
(*Canadian Garland*, Aug. 31, 1833)

For this reason, missionary attempts to convert Indians could be and were regarded as essential and praiseworthy pursuits. Bishop Mountain declared religion to be a positive, civilizing force for the Indian:

O could the broken tribes, in spots apart
Of these far woods who plant their shifting home,
The Shepherd of their souls receive in heart,
Own his blest voice, and owning cease to roam!

And God be thank'd! the process is begun;
  Wide in the soil the seeds of blessing lurk;
Wide will the leavening efficacy run
  Through the crude mass, and do its destined work.

See on the margin of the ruddy stream
  (So named) where meads in boundless level spread,
Men of mix'd race - (who thence of good would dream?)
  The stock once sprung from many a lawless bed.

See now with these in every social tie
  And Christian bond, - oh, sight to glad the mind!
Swart children of the woods with lustrous eye
  And old Europa's paler sons combined.
(*Songs of the Wilderness*, pp. 17-18)

The effect of religion upon the individual, which has provided the focus for the preceding extracts, here is definitely secondary to the emphasis placed upon religion's social capacity. Bishop Mountain has claimed great social powers for religion. He has declared here that religion can transform a nomadic society into a sedentary one, and that it can effect a peaceful and positive intermixture of the races. He was more hopeful than accurate, unfortunately, in both of these claims.

Bishop Mountain's praise of missionary endeavour may have been intended primarily for members of his own institution, but he never specifically said so. In avoiding a discussion of religion in purely sectarian terms, Mountain handled the topic in a fashion generally typical of its treatment by Canadian poets of his time. Standish O'Grady, in fact, pointedly insisted upon the basic equality of all sects, when he rhymed:

Let each sectarian argue for the best,
Yet all agree the monitor's the breast!
To different tenets let what will befall,
Instinct points out one Deity to all.
(*The Emigrant*, p. 87)

O'Grady may have been a sectarian of another kind. His was a religion of the heart and to his gaze all other sects paled in importance and validity. But his position seems not to have been unique among Canadian poets in the implication that adherence to internal realities far surpasses in importance and in efficacy the observation of external forms. A contemporary wrote:

> For God is a spirit, and they who aright
> Would perform the pure worship he loveth,
> In the heart's holy temple will seek with delight
> The spirit the Father approveth.
>
> (*Hallowell Free Press*, Apr. 17, 1832)

There was, of course, no intention ever to extend non-sectarianism to include non-Christian systems of worship. On the contrary, even structures of belief that grew from Christian origins, social, cultural, and religious, were subjected to attack if they appeared to be moving in a non-Christian direction. It was probably in this context that Dr. Haskins attacked Transcendentalism, for while the assault was superficially launched against a literary style, the religion upon which the style was built was inevitably criticized by association:

> Oh! Transcendentalism, in verse or prose,
> (That word's as bad as '*aequotuticum*',)
> Is what I loathe, abhor, detest, despise:
> For transcendental writings, all and some,
> My detestation I cannot disguise.
> "*Inania capant*" each, and all of those,
> For whom true nature never could suffice;
> Who, seeking most original to be,
> O'erlook the charm of truth - simplicity.
> This fault hath marred full many a one; whose strains
> Might live a thousand years, wer't but for this:
> For what they seek to find with so much pains,
> Forsaking the sole way, they're sure to miss.
> None like obscurity, and air-spun fancies;
> This Transcendentalism no heart entrances.
> (*The Poetical Works . . .*, pp. 294-295)

The Transcendental attitude to nature exerted its most significant influences upon Canadian poetry toward the end of the nineteenth century, and even affected the verse of Haskins' contemporary, Peter John Allan, but it was clearly not amenable to Haskins himself, nor to most of his fellow writers. Transcendentalism, Haskins felt, attributed to nature an unnecessarily complex role. To him, nature represented the simplicity of truth in a straightforward, uncomplicated fashion. Haskins never specified the particular constituents of this simple truth, but very probably it involved a portrayal of nature as a simple emblem of Christian truth and Christian divinity. At any rate, it was in this latter fashion that nature was most often depicted by Haskins and his Canadian colleagues.

Nature, Andrew Shiels implied, was the voice of the divine, speaking to and through the emotions of the spectators:

> For me all nature has a voice,
> The stars a hymn - the moon a lecture,
> The sun delights me with the joys
> He gives to earth's illusive picture;
> And heaven's high arc, vast and sublime,
> Has blest my vision many a time.
> (*The Witch of the Westcot*, p. 149)

M. Ethelind Sawtell was similarly impressed with a realization of the divine presence in the beauty of nature, specifically, in the sublimity of the St. Lawrence River and its adjoining scenery when viewed at sunset:

> Now the rich tints of sunset deepen o'er
> The grand expansive river, as it widens to
> The gleaming lake, o'er which the ambient clouds
> In varying beauty float, resplendent with
> The parting sun-beam's radiance, with the mist
> Of streak-suffusing vapor blendeth with

Its golden lustre; and the distant chain
Of high blue mountains mingle as a trace
Of something visioned in the far dim clouds.

. . .

Now distant echoes sweetly break upon
The fervent tribute of reflective thought
To the Almighty offered 'mid His works
Sublimely beautiful. Oh! what a thrill
Is that which rises when the heart is poured
As an oblation, in the loneness of
The solemn wilderness. Who there can kneel
In hushed devotion's worship, and then gaze
And listen, and not feel the strength
Of His creative Arm? - not see it on
The forest's lowliest blossoms? and not hear
It in the strains of evening melody
The joyous wild-bird's warble? . . .
(*The Mourner's Tribute*, pp. 220-221)

Nature was again depicted here as fulfilling its emblematic role through its ability to arouse the spectator emotionally. Canadian poets, continuing in the sentimental tradition, were concerned more with moving the heart than with stimulating the intellect. They did not envision their landscape as a source of intellectual allegory, but investigated and propounded its affective potencies. In doing so, they wrote frequently of nature's sublimity, as Sawtell did above, partially because evoking the sublime was a literary stratagem designed to elicit elevated and intense emotion from the reader, but also because the poet seems to have honestly experienced that kind of emotion in his interaction with Canadian nature.

The Canadian landscape did, after all, offer various grand and imposing vistas to the immigrant eye and imagination. The immensity of the landscape itself was impressive. The St. Lawrence River was gigantic in comparison to any homeland waterway, as were the Great Lakes. And above all, the power and the size of Niagara Falls so

overwhelmed and entranced the imagination of Canadian writers that they produced a large quantity of verse about the Falls. James K. Liston, in fact, composed a lengthy narrative of almost ninety pages entitled *Niagara Falls* which opened with an apostrophe to the Falls as a monument of Divine Power and went on to describe them as a central symbol of the sublimity and minuteness of God's creation:

> How grand, how simple, how complete, how plain,
> How manifold, how indivisible,
> How bright, how small, how marvellously mixt!
> Oh what a web of wondrous workmanship
> Is God's creation visible to man!
> In all the moving myriads propell'd
> Swift down the gradual sloping of the stream,
> And then thrown o'er Niagara's battlements . . .
> (*Niagara Falls*, p. 12)

George Menzies[39] was even more direct, regarding an experience of the Falls as an encounter with God, and as an encounter which would inevitably give a positive moral direction to the individual's life forever after:

> Pilgrim of nature! thou hast come and knelt
> Where God's omnipotence is deepliest felt,
> Go - and bear with thee to whatever clime
> Thy foot may wander, memories more sublime,
> And dreams of glory holier - more intense,
> Than aught that thrills the unregenerate sense
> Of earth-born rapture - this is not an hour
> That needs some relick to reveal its power;
> But oft and oft, unbidden, it will fall
> On thy rapt spirit, deeply tinging all
> Thy thoughts with an undying consciousness,
> Of solemn transport but a little less
> Than theirs who walk around the eternal throne,
> And hold communion with the almighty ONE!
> (*St. Catharines Journal*, Aug. 4, 1836)

While not as popular as the sublime, a sense of nature's picturesqueness also provoked the composition of several poems - even a

few in which the picturesque was also presented as emblematic of God. Mrs. Traill, for example, concluded a poem describing a variety of pleasing wildflowers with the following verse:

> Though ye blossom in the wilderness,
> Where mortal foot ne'er trod;
> Yet ye offer up an incense sweet,
> On the altar of your God!
> (*Literary Garland*, Feb. 1846, p. 58)

Most often, however, the picturesque was evoked in straightforward descriptive poetry, only for the purpose of eliciting a pleasant, suffusive glow. Such is the quality of Mrs. Moodie's "The Wood Lane":

> I know a lane thick set with golden broom,
> Where the pale primrose and tall orchids bloom;
> And azure violets, lowly drooping, shed
> Delicious perfume o'er their mossy bed;
> And all the first-born blossoms of the year,
> That spring uncultured, bud and flourish here.
>
> 'Tis sweet to trace the footsteps of the spring
> O'er the green earth - to see her lightly fling
> Her fragrant wreaths o'er Nature's breathing shrine.
> And round the lofty woods her garland twine;
> To hear her voice in ev'ry passing breeze,
> That stirs the new-born foliage on the trees.
> (*Literary Garland*, Mar. 1843, p. 136)

Canadian poets published a substantial amount of purely descriptive poetry in the two decades between 1830 and 1851, much more than they had previously, but they never shook off the habit of regarding nature and her processes as convenient exempla of truth. They did this even when they were not directly concerned with theological truth. David Wylie's poem "The Last Leaf on the Tree" uses nature to warn of the inevitable fact of human mortality, but it does not go on to direct the reader to prepare for an afterlife:

Deserted and withered,
No dear one beside thee;
Thou'rt ripe to be gather'd
Ah! who then could chide thee.
Forsaken forever,
Thy mates return never.

E'en so with man is it;
Old age round him gathers;
He, silver-crowned, drops
In the grave of his fathers -
The tomb is the token
His sleep is unbroken.
(*Recollections of a Convict*, p. 157)

Similarly, the Niagara River could be viewed as an emblem of stability in the midst of human transiency, without any concomitant religious or moral exhortation:

Thy rapid flow! ah - whence its date?
Ten thousand years - since time began?
Can history's ample page relate?
Or scientific boast of man?

Year after year, age after age,
Have found eternity their grave,
Since thou hast met time's ceaseless rage,
Defied his might - his power t'enslave.

Proud Athens! boast of ancient Greece!
Hath every shred of glory furl'd;
And lost like pebbles in the seas
Is Rome, great mistress of the world.

But thou hast roll'd thy numbers on,
Mid sunny banks and tufted bowers,
Unnumber'd rounds yon springtime sun
Hath met thee with the days of flowers.
(*British American Journal*, Mar. 18, 1854)

In these last two poems, specific items of nature have been looked upon as measurements of mortality and of history, and it was in this fashion that the secular vision of the early Canadian nature poet most often depicted nature as functioning. But in a more positive light, he also regarded nature as possessing the ability to revive human

spirits. Witness the following apostrophe to a waterfall near Dundas, Upper Canada:

> When affection's cheering voice
> On the ear all joyless falls:
> When the cup of pleasure cloys,
> And the tone of music palls;
> When the works of man seem vain,
> And to the wearied eye
> Art's monotony gives pain,
> 'Tis to Nature then we fly:
> There fays dwell in the fountains,
> And spirits in the breeze,
> Companions in the mountains,
> And songsters in the trees;
> There mental strife subsides -
> There flies the feverish dream;
> Thro' flowers the fancy glides
> Like thee, thou playful stream . . .
> (*Canadian Casket*, Feb. 25, 1832)

And finally, the Canadian poet would have been dishonest indeed if he had not acknowledged, in anything more than a metaphorical manner, the destructive capacities of nature - if he had not admitted that nature could be more than a symbolic threat. In fact, Canadian verse of this period did make such an admission. John Galt composed a narrative entitled "Fire in the Forest" in which he depicted an immigrant family struggling doggedly against the forces of nature and finally losing to those forces in the combination of a forest fire and a "vindictive winter" (*The Demon of Destiny*, pp. 69-72). In a less serious vein, Daniel Haydn Mayne described the realistic, and odious, landscape of Toronto's Don River:

> Instead of pebbled bed and sparkling shore,
> A trench of mud marks out thy fated line;
> And glossy snakes, that mock the diamond ore,
> Lie still and eye thee while the sun doth shine:

There's warfare in thy shoals of weeds and slime
There's death upon thy banks and in thy water;
Dark reptiles breaking one another's spine . . .
(*Poems and Fragments*, pp. 97-100)

Here we have nature "red in tooth and claw" years before Tennyson said it or Darwin fully documented it.

Nature was also present, at least peripherally, in Canadian verse of the time in the figure of the North American Indian. As in earlier periods, he was frequently considered to be a child of nature. His close association with the landscape made him an attractive, even a noble, figure to most Canadian versifiers, the Bishop Mountains notwithstanding. Joseph Howe lauded the Micmac's prowess in the hunt and depicted him as the proud ruler of a beautiful landscape, likening him, in fact, to Shakespeare's "noble Moor":

. . . as he casts his proud and fearless glance,
O'er each fair feature of the wide expanse,
The blushing flowers - the groves of stately pine-
The glassy lakes that in the sunbeams shine -
The swelling sea - the hills that heavenward soar -
The mountain stream, meandering to the shore -
Or hears the birds' blythe song, the woods' deep tone -
He feels, yes proudly feels, 'tis all his own.

Thus, as the am'rous Moor with joy survey'd
The budding beauties of Venetia's maid,
Drank in the beamings of her love-lit eye,
Her bosom's swell, the music of her sigh
He felt, and who can tell that feeling's bliss,
Moor though he was, her beauties all were his.
(*Nineteenth-Century Narrative Poems*, pp. 22-23)

This praise is not unadulterated however. Howe has attributed to his Indian only a sensual response to nature, and has suggested, in the phrase "Moor though he was," that the Indian is essentially inferior to the poet's own kind. Nevertheless, within these limitations, the

Indian still appears to have possessed nobility in Howe's eyes.

When not engaged in direct praise for the Indian, the Canadian versifier was often composing laments for the destruction of Indian civilization and denunciations of white society for its responsibility in destroying Indian life. The elegiac note is clearly heard in the following verses from a poem addressed to Lake Ontario:

> ... where are now the dusky chiefs, that haughty warrior band,
> Who long a mighty sceptre swayed o'er all this forest land?
> Where are those dauntless spirits now, those heroes of the past,
> And where is proud TORONTO gone, thy bravest and thy last?
>
> From thy deep caves no answer flows, no wish'd response is borne,
> Save the low murmur of thy waves, as they unceasing mourn,
> And ever chaunt a dirge-like strain, a solemn requiem slow,
> For chiefs who ever fearless met, nor blanch'd before the foe!
> (*Literary Garland*, May 1845, p. 237)

This poet did not go on to indict the white man for the Indian's passing but several others did. James Liston searingly declared that

> ... Heathens learn from Christians to kill
> With better grace, precision more polite;
> To swear, and swallow alcoholic draughts,
> That burn the blood, and "steal away the brains."
> (*Niagara Falls*, p. 15)

Bishop Mountain's blessings of civilization were not unmixed.

The Canadian writer's ability, here and elsewhere, to recognize the real ambivalences of his physical, social, and spiritual environments, testifies to the relative independence of outlook which he was now acquiring. Canadian voices were beginning to take their own shape

and tone. They were developing a distinctiveness attributable in part to subject matter which was not only North American, but also uniquely Canadian. This was especially true of political and social themes and less true of nature and religious themes. And some Canadian poets were not simply using this material; they were responding to it, interacting with it, to affect inevitably their poetic expression, not in form, but in attitude, atmosphere, and tone.

Here we have the merest beginnings of a Canadian poetic identity, an identity impossible of any confident and specific definition as yet. The evidence of much borrowing and imitating clearly indicates this impossibility, but these beginnings would very soon flower in the work of Rosanna Leprohon, who had already published in the *Literary Garland*, of Charles Sangster, in his time regarded as the poet laureate of Canada, and of Charles Mair, the first significant poet of confederated Canada. Even in these poets Canada could not claim poetic maturity. At the same time, their voices do possess a character not produced elsewhere.

NOTES ON CHAPTER I

[1] See Gillian T. Cell in *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, edited by George W. Brown [and others] (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1966), I, pp. 654-657.

[2] *Ibid.*

[3] Hayman, *Quodlibets*, p. 31. All subsequent quotations from this volume will be identified by page number only.

[4] Henry Kelsey, *The Kelsey Papers*, introd. by Arthur G. Doughty & Chester Martin (Ottawa: F. A. Acland, King's Printer, 1929), p. 2.

NOTES ON CHAPTER II

[1] John Bushell was a New Englander. He had been a partner of Bartholomew Green and when the latter's death put an end to his plans of beginning a printing establishment in Nova Scotia, Bushell took over and carried on with some difficulty until his own death in 1761. He had a daughter, Elizabeth, who was apparently an excellent typesetter.

[2] Anthony Henry (Anton Heinrich) was a German mercenary who came to Nova Scotia as a regimental fifer in 1758. He quickly joined Bushell as a helper and eventually became publisher and printer himself. He was a colourful individual who was reputed to have married first a Negress and then a ninety-year old woman - each time in order to obtain the capital necessary to maintain his printing ventures. Isaiah Thomas, in his *History of Printing in America*, has indicated that the second incident, at least, is more legend than fact.

[3] Robert Fletcher was an Englishman who became King's Printer when Henry fell afoul of the colonial authorities. When Henry later returned to printing, the competition proved too much for Fletcher who sold out to the former and apparently returned to England.

NOTES ON CHAPTER II cont'd.

[4] Alline was born in Newport, Rhode Island on January 14, 1748 and came to Nova Scotia with his family in 1760. He experienced a religious conversion in early manhood and became an itinerant preacher. He was ordained at Falmouth, Nova Scotia on April 6, 1779. He preached primarily in Nova Scotia with some forays into New Brunswick. Always conscious of his lack of formal education, he had left the province to rectify this deficiency when he died from exhaustion in New Hampshire in 1784.

[5] Nothing can be said of Viets' life as yet.

[6] D. G. G. Kerr, ed., *A Historical Atlas of Canada* (Toronto: Thomas Nelson & Sons, 1960), p. 36.

[7] Jonathan Odell was born in Newark, N. J., in 1737 and graduated from the College of New Jersey in 1759 as a physician. He became a surgeon in the British army for a short time, but was ordained in England in 1767. That same year he came back to New Jersey for the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel. During the war he was a staunch anti-republican and served the British assiduously. He was a go-between in the Arnold Affair for the British negotiator, André, and in 1783 was assistant secretary to Sir Guy Carleton at New York. In 1784, he came to New Brunswick, quickly became registrar and clerk of the province, with a seat on the executive council, and maintained these offices until he retired and left them to his son in 1812. He died in 1818.

[8] Stansbury was born in London in 1742 (O.S.?) and came to America in 1767. He was a merchant in Philadelphia and a writer of satirical verse against the republicans. He was also Benedict Arnold's go-between in the latter's negotiations with the British. He was forced to leave the United States in 1783 although he was willing to stay. After three years in Nova Scotia he was back in the United States and died in New York in 1809.

[9] John Howe was a Loyalist from Rhode Island. He is most noted for having been the father of Joseph Howe but is important in his own right as one of the most significant early publishers in the Maritimes.

NOTES ON CHAPTER II cont'd.

[10] Another Loyalist printer of whom nothing more seems to be known at present.

[11] John Ryan was also a Loyalist who had been apprenticed to John Howe in Newport, Rhode Island. After serving for a long time as an important publisher in New Brunswick, he went off, by government invitation, to Newfoundland in 1807 where he founded that colony's first periodical, *The Royal Gazette and Newfoundland Advertiser*. He died in St. John's on September 30, 1847.

[12] William Lewis, another Loyalist, helped Ryan to establish the *Royal St. John's Gazette* in 1783. When the two men had trouble with the colonial authorities, however, he quickly returned to the United States.

[13] Christopher Sower III (1754-1799) was a Loyalist from Germantown, Pennsylvania where his family had operated a printing establishment (mostly in German) for three generations. He came to New Brunswick in 1785, where he later became King's Printer as well as Deputy Postmaster-General. He left the province in 1799 and died a few months later in Baltimore, Maryland.

[14] James Robertson was a restless Loyalist who had first come to Shelburne, Nova Scotia, and had established a paper there. He went to Prince Edward Island in 1787 but left for England finally in 1790.

[15] Rind's origin and fate are both still obscure.

[16] Haszard's identity is also unknown as yet.

[17] *A Historical Atlas of Canada*, p. 36.

[18] E. J. Devereux, "Early Printing in Newfoundland," *Dalhousie Review*, 43 (1: Spring, 1963), 57-66.

NOTES ON CHAPTER II cont'd.

[19] It was the custom to designate the local work either by the inclusion of the contributor's own headnote or by the heading "For the ...".

[20] Cowdell was born in Britain, but lived most of his adult life in Nova Scotia. He was a merchant in Halifax with uncertain success.

[21] No more information is available about Chubb.

[22] Hogg (1800-1866) was born in Leitrim, Ireland and came to New Brunswick in 1819. He founded the *New Brunswick Reporter* at Fredericton in 1844 and edited it until his death.

[23] Cockings was born in England. He held a small post under the British government, first in Newfoundland, and then in Boston. He returned to Britain where he died on February 6, 1807. He composed a variety of verse and dramas which were, as the *Dictionary of National Biography* relates, "of the feeblest order."

[24] Cartwright was born at Marnham, England on February 12, 1739 (O.S.). Before his Labrador sojourn he was an army officer and afterwards he returned to that occupation. His *Journal of Transactions and Events During a Residence of Nearly Sixteen Years on the Coast of Labrador* was published in three volumes in 1792. He died at Nottinghamshire on February 19, 1819.

[25] Grandnephew to the English poet, Oliver Goldsmith was born in New Brunswick in 1794. He was raised in Nova Scotia where he held a post in the commissariat department and in 1833 returned to New Brunswick in a similar position. In 1844 he went to Hong Kong and in 1861 died, still a bachelor, in Liverpool, England.

[26] Marsden was born near Liverpool, England in 1777. He came to Nova Scotia as a Methodist missionary in 1800 and left Canada in 1808. He died in England in 1837. His poetry continued to be printed in Canadian magazines into the 1830's.

NOTES ON CHAPTER II cont'd.

[27] Andrew Shiels, a Scotsman, born in 1793, became a stipendiary magistrate in Halifax and later died in Dartmouth in 1879. He published frequently in local presses under the *nom-de-plume* "Albyn."

[28] Little need be said of Howe who should be well known to all as a result of his political career. He began his career as printer and publisher, however, first of the *Acadian Magazine* and then of his famous *Nova Scotian*. He wrote occasional poetry throughout his life, although most of it was published posthumously.

[29] Bailey was born in Rowley, Massachusetts in 1731 of poor parents. He graduated from Harvard in 1755 and became a school teacher for a short time. He was first licensed as a Congregationalist preacher on June 4, 1758, but soon after journeyed to England where he was ordained an Anglican minister on March 16, 1760. He was sent back to Maine by the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel where he remained until his Loyalist sentiments forced him to depart for Nova Scotia during the Revolutionary War. He was rector at Annapolis until his death on March 22, 1818.

[30] Bonamy Dobrée, *English Literature in the Early Eighteenth Century* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1959), p. 10.

[31] Henry Alline, *Hymns and Spiritual Songs* (2d ed., with some enlargements; Dover: Samuel Bragg, Jr., 1795). All subsequent quotations from Alline are from this edition.

[32] George Whitefield had been a Wesleyan Methodist but became a leader of the Calvinistic Methodists. He was an extremely effective evangelistic missionary, especially in America where he made several tours, at least one of which brought him into the Canadian Maritimes. He died in 1770.

[33] No further information concerning Bisset seems to be available presently, other than those details contained in this poem.

NOTES ON CHAPTER II cont'd.

34 E. K. Brown, *On Canadian Poetry* (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1943), p. 14.

35 *The American Times* was a pseudonymous work published in London. It is customarily attributed to Odell. See Carl F. Klinck and Reginald E. Watters, *Canadian Anthology* (rev. ed., Toronto: W. J. Gage, 1966), p. 7.

36 [Thomas Daniel Cowdell] *A Poetical Account of the American Campaigns of 1812 and 1813; With Some Slight Sketches Relating to the Party Politics Which Governed the United States, During the War, and Its Commencement. Dedicated to the People of Canada. By the Publisher* (Halifax: John Howe, 1815).

37 Thomas Daniel Cowdell, *The Nova Scotia Minstrel, Written on a Tour from North America to Great Britain and Ireland; With Suitable Reflections and Moral Songs Adapted to Popular Airs* (Dublin: For the Author, 1817).

NOTES ON CHAPTER III

1 Kenneth McNaught, *The Pelican History of Canada* (London: Penguin Books, 1969), p. 47.

2 W. L. Morton, *The Kingdom of Canada* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1963), p. 178.

3 *Ibid.*, p. 190.

4 William Brown was born in Scotland and came to Philadelphia as a small boy. There he learned the printing trade and practised it briefly in the Barbados before coming to Quebec City in partnership with Gilmore. After the latter's death, the *Gazette* eventually became his alone. Upon his death on March 22, 1789, it passed into the hands of his Scottish relatives, the Neilson family.

NOTES ON CHAPTER III cont'd.

[5] Thomas Gilmore was apparently a native Pennsylvanian.. He reputedly became a problem drinker prior to his demise in Quebec in 1772.

[6] Fleury Mesplet was born in Lyons, France. He apprenticed as a printer there as well as in Paris. A free thinker, he found it expedient to move to London in 1773, where he met Benjamin Franklin who apparently prompted his further removal to Philadelphia. After Montgomery's capture of Montreal in 1775, the Continental Congress financed a printing venture for Mesplet in that city, a venture obviously aimed at winning over the French settlers. When Mesplet arrived in Montreal in 1776, however, the American forces had retreated. He stayed on as a printer and experienced an uneven career, hampered by his democratic sympathies and numerous debts. He died in Montreal on January 29, 1794.

[7] Nothing is known of William Moore beyond his proprietorship of the *Herald* and the fact that his property was seized for debt in 1793.

[8] After his failure in Montreal, Roy moved on to New York where he spent the remainder of his life.

[9] Thomas Cary was born near Bristol, England, in 1751. After coming to Canada, he was secretary to Governor Robert Prescott in 1792, and in 1805 he founded the *Quebec Mercury*, a Tory paper which he ran until his death in 1823.

[10] Stephen Dickson, a native of Ireland, graduated from and taught medicine at the University of Dublin until his implication in the rebellion of 1798. He came first to the United States, and then spent the winter of 1798-99 at Quebec City, under the close scrutiny of the colony's officials.

[11] J. Mackay is an unknown who claims in his preface to have spent a considerable amount of time in Quebec.

NOTES ON CHAPTER III cont'd.

[12] Cornwall Bayley was born in England in 1784. Educated at Christ's College, Cambridge, he travelled to North America in 1804. He died in 1807.

[13] Nahum Mower was a printer from Vermont who later printed the *Canadian Magazine* for Joseph Nickless.

[14] Very little can be said of William Gray other than that he died early in the 1820's. After the death of his widow in December, 1823, the *Herald* became the property of Archibald Ferguson.

[15] Stephen Dickson, *The Union of Taste and Science* (Quebec: John Neilson, 1799), p. 5. Reprinted in Bibliographical Society of Canada Facsimile Series, no. 2, ed. Fred G. Ketcheson, Toronto, 1952.

[16] This poem was printed only three days after the event, indicating the promptness with which the local poets often responded to matters of immediate concern.

[17] Thomas Cary, *Abram's Plains. A Poem* (Quebec: Author, 1789). Reprinted in *Three Early Poems From Lower Canada*, ed. Michael Gnarowski (Montreal: For the Lawrence M. Lande Foundation at the McLennan Library, McGill University, 1969), p. 33.

[18] Cornwall Bayley, *Canada. A Descriptive Poem* (Quebec: John Neilson, 1806). Reprinted in *Three Early Poems From Lower Canada* (See note 17).

[19] J. Mackay, *Quebec Hill; or, Canadian Scenery.* A Poem in Two Parts (London: Blackader, 1797). Reprinted in *Three Early Poems From Lower Canada* (See note 17).

NOTES ON CHAPTER IV

[1] For information concerning Burwell see note 5 for Chapter V.

[2] Wilcocke was an Englishman who came to Canada in the service of the fur industry but was soon forsaken by his employers, and afterwards persecuted and harassed by them. He fought back through the pages of *The Scribbler* which he was forced to print in the United States.

[3] Little can be asserted of Bowman other than that he was an American in Montreal in the early 1820's, and was involved in printing, bookselling and publishing for a short time in that city.

[4] Mrs. Blennerhassett, born Margaret Agnew in Ireland, married her uncle, Harman Blennerhassett, and travelled to the United States where her husband purchased an island in the Ohio River. He was involved in the schemes of Aaron Burr and was forced to leave the United States in 1819. He and his wife took refuge in Montreal for a time. She later returned to the United States.

[5] Levi Adams was a Canadian-born writer who contributed prolifically to the journals of Lower Canada in the 1820's. He was trained as an advocate and was admitted to the bar in 1829. He died in Montreal of cholera on July 21, 1832.

[6] The authorship of *Tales of Chivalry and Romance* has been attributed to Adams by Dr. Carl F. Klinck.

[7] A native of Ireland, Sweeny settled in Montreal about 1820, and was killed in a duel in 1840. In addition to *Odds and Ends*, he published *Remants* in Montreal in 1835.

[8] Hawley was born in 1804 and died at Laprairie, Canada East in 1855. In addition to *Quebec, The Harp, and Other Poems*, he produced *The Unknown, or, Lays of the Forest* which was published in Montreal in 1831.

NOTES ON CHAPTER IV cont'd.

[9] Kidd was born in Ireland in 1802. In Canada, he studied for the ministry but was not ordained. He died in Quebec on July 5, 1831.

[10] Levi Adams, *Jean Baptiste; A Poetic Olio, in Il Canto* (Montreal: 1825), pp. 1-2.

[11] Adam Kidd, *The Huron Chief, and Other Poems* (Montreal: Office of the Herald and New Gazette, 1830), p. 162.

[12] The authorship of this poem is attributed to Adams by Dr. Carl F. Klinck in his article "*The Charivari* and Levi Adams," *Dalhousie Review*, 40 (Spring, 1960), pp. 34-42.

[13] Robert Sweeny, *Odds and Ends* (Montreal: James and Thomas A. Starke, 1836), p. 11.

[14] [Levi Adams] supposed author, *Tales of Chivalry and Romance* (Edinburgh: J. Robertson, 1826), pp. 140-141.

[15] Kidd, *op. cit.*, p. 34.

[16] William Fitz Hawley, *Quebec, The Harp, and Other Poems* (Montreal: The Herald and New Gazette Office, 1829), pp. 15-16.

[17] "Poetry Run Mad," *Montreal Herald*, Nov. 5, 1825. The poem is signed L. A. and its tone and mode of Byronic satire confirm the likelihood of Adams' authorship.

[18] Lawrence M. Lande, *Old Lamps Aglow*, pp. 126-127.

NOTES ON CHAPTER V

[1] Miles was born at Royalton, Vermont in 1789. He came to Canada as Nahum Mower's apprentice in 1807 and founded the *Kingston Gazette* in 1810 under the sponsorship of Mower and Charles Kendall. Miles sold his press in 1819 and for nine years printed the *Upper Canada Herald*, owned and edited by Hugh C. Thomson. Miles had had some problems while operating as his own editor, but re-established himself as owner-editor-printer with the *Kingston Gazette and Religious Advocate* (Kingston: 1828-1830) and the *Grenville Gazette* (Prescott: 1832-1833). In 1835 he gave up printing to become an itinerant Wesleyan preacher. He died at Ernestown, Ontario in 1870.

[2] Bertha Bassom, *The First Printers and Newspapers in Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1968), p. 14.

[3] Gerald M. Craig, *Upper Canada; The Formative Years, 1784-1841* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1963), p. 6.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 51.

[5] Burwell, the son of New Jersey Loyalists, was born near Fort Erie, Upper Canada in 1790. He published many poems in the local presses and the Montreal magazines prior to becoming an Anglican minister in 1828. He edited *The Christian Sentinel* at Three Rivers from 1830 to 1831 while serving there as minister, and printed some of his own poems in its pages. He eventually forsook the Anglican ministry. He published some poetry in the *Literary Garland* in 1849, the year in which he died in Kingston, Ontario.

[6] James Lynne Alexander, clergyman and poet, was born in Ireland in 1800 and came with his parents to Canada about 1816. He taught school and then became an Anglican minister in 1832. He served in the Eastern Townships and in Ontario, dying in the latter in 1870. He published poetry in the local presses under the pseudonym "A Canadian," but *Wonders of the West* was his only volume.

[7] James Martin Cawdell, verse-writer, sometime soldier, commissary, school-teacher, librarian, and secretary to the Law Society of Upper Canada, died in Toronto on July 13, 1842.

NOTES ON CHAPTER [illegible]ont'd.:

[8] Major John Richardson was born at Queenston in 1796 and was raised in the Detroit-Amherstburg area. A cadet in the War of 1812, he was captured at Moraviantown and spent a year as a prisoner of war in Kentucky. He pursued an army career in Europe until 1838. Returning to Canada, he settled first in Brockville where he edited *The New Era* (1840-1842) and *The Canadian Loyalist* (1843-1844). He went to New York in 1850 and died there in abject poverty in 1852. He composed novels and historical works as well as poetry.

[9] Marshall Spring Bidwell was born in 1799 at Stockbridge, Massachusetts and came with his father, Barnabas, to Canada in 1810. He was called to the bar of Upper Canada in 1821 and in the same year was elected to the Assembly of the province to replace his father who had not been allowed to take his seat. The son was similarly rebuffed. By 1825 the election law had been changed and Marshall Spring Bidwell was re-elected. He was twice speaker of the Assembly and leader of the moderate wing of the Radicals. He did not participate in the rebellion of 1837 but was advised by Francis Bond Head, the governor, to leave the province. He did so and had a successful legal career in Albany, New York where he died in 1872.

[10] Also in Adam Hood Burwell, *The Poems of Adam Hood Burwell, Pioneer Poet of Upper Canada*, ed. Carl F. Klinck in Western Ontario History Nuggets, No. 30 (London, Ont.: Lawson Memorial Library, University of Western Ontario, 1963).

[11] Cawdell removed the second verse and changed his verb tenses when he published this poem in his *Wandering Rhymer* in 1826 (p. 13), but these concessions to the intervening history do not substantially alter his, or the poem's, attitudes.

NOTES ON CHAPTER VI

[1] The *Canadian, British American and West Indian Magazine* was actually published in London, England but was comprised primarily of prose and poetry selected from a variety of Canadian magazines and newspapers.

NOTES ON CHAPTER VI cont'd.

[2] Alexander Johnston Williamson, born about 1796, was a physician who apparently practised journalism rather than medicine. At one time editor of a short-lived journal, the *Anglo-Canadian* in Belleville, U. C., he produced three volumes of poetry: *Original Poems on Various Subjects* (Toronto: 1836), *There is a God, With Other Poems* (Toronto: 1839), and *Devotional Poems* (Toronto: 1840). As his titles indicate, he wrote primarily on religious themes and his stance was distinct from his fellows in its Donne-like aggressiveness towards God. He died in Toronto on October 13, 1870.

[3] Daniel Haydn Mayne seems to have been a Toronto schoolteacher in 1837, and he published his *Poems and Fragments* there in 1838, but nothing further is known of him presently.

[4] John Galt, an English novelist, and officer of the Canada Company which organized the settlement of tracts of land in Upper Canada, founded Guelph in 1827, but spent the last ten years of his life in poverty in England and Scotland. *The Demon of Destiny, and Other Poems* was published in Greenock in 1839, the year of his death, and contained verse with Canadian settings.

[5] William A. Stephens was born in Belfast, Ireland in 1809, and came to Canada in early youth. He was a frequent contributor of verse to a variety of early Upper Canada magazines, and published several volumes of verse as well: *Hamilton, and Other Poems* (Toronto: 1840), *A Poetical Geography, and Rhyming Rules for Spelling* (Toronto: 1848), *Hamilton, and Other Poems, and Lectures* (Toronto: 1871), *The Centennial: An International Poem* (Toronto: 1878). He died on March 21, 1891 at Owen Sound where he had worked as customs officer.

[6] Sir John Smyth, a self-styled peer and poet laureate, was a pathetically comic figure who lived in Toronto during the 1830's and 1840's. His *Select Poems*, very badly written doggerel, was published in Toronto in 1841.

[7] George W. Gillespie is not listed by either Morgan or Wallace but both do list a William Gillespy, author of *Fugitive Poetry* (Hamilton: 1846). It is uncertain, however, that this is the same man who composed *Miscellaneous Poems* (Toronto: 1843).

NOTES ON CHAPTER VI cont'd.

[8] John Rumsey (pseudonym "Plinius Secundus") was a Toronto lawyer who wrote a volume of verse on Canadian law and law courts, *Curiae Canadenses*, published at Toronto in 1843.

[9] James Knox Liston, one-time resident of Clinton, Upper Canada, was the author of *Niagara Falls: A Poem* (Toronto: 1843) and *Poetry for the Dominion of Canada* (Toronto: 1868).

[10] Alexander M'Lachlan (or McLachlan) was born in Scotland in 1818 and came to Canada in 1840 where he spent his life as farmer and poet. In the latter capacity he published several volumes: *The Spirit of Love, and Other Poems* (Toronto: 1858), *The Emigrant, and Other Poems* (Toronto: 1861), *Poems and Songs* (Toronto: 1874; 2d ed., 1888). After his death in 1896 *The Poetical Works of Alexander McLachlan* (Toronto: 1900) were issued.

[11] John Breakenridge was born at Niagara in 1820 and educated at Upper Canada College. He practised law in Belleville and Kingston. He wrote under the pseudonym of "Claude Halcro" for various magazines, including the *Literary Garland*, and published *The Crusades, and Other Poems* (Kingston: 1846). He died in 1854.

[12] John Newton published a volume entitled *The Emigrant, and Other Pieces* in Hamilton in 1846. Nothing further is known of him.

[13] James Haskins was born in Dublin, Ireland in 1805, educated at Trinity College and came to Canada in 1834. He practised medicine near Belleville and published poetry in the *Literary Garland*. A collection of his poetry, the *Poetical Works* (Hartford: 1848) was published after his death which occurred in 1845.

[14] The Rev. R. J. MacGeorge was born in Scotland in 1811, and educated at Glasgow and Edinburgh Universities. He was ordained an Anglican minister the year before coming to Canada in 1841 where he took up residence in Streetsville, Upper Canada. He edited the *Streetsville Review* (1845-1858), the *Anglo-American Magazine* (1852-1855), and *The Canadian Christian Offering* (Toronto: 1848). As its title suggests, this last was an anthology of verse of a moral and

NOTES ON CHAPTER VI cont'd.

religious tenor. MacGeorge also authored *Tales, Sketches, and Lyrics* (Toronto: 1858), but had returned to Scotland in 1854 and he died there on May 14, 1884.

15 Peter Fisher spanned both pre- and post-1830 periods. He was born in Staten Island, New York on June 9, 1782. The following year he was brought to Saint John, New Brunswick by his Loyalist parents. His major works were histories of New Brunswick, and it is for these that he is primarily known. He also wrote poetry, however, especially *The Lay of the Wilderness*, published by John Chubb in 1833. Fisher died on August 15, 1848.

16 John K. Laskey was a poet, novelist and journalist. He edited an agricultural journal, *Plow and Anvil*, in St. Stephen, New Brunswick in 1835. He published two volumes of poetry: *Mars Hill, and Other Poems* (Saint John, 1838) and *Leisure Hours* (Saint John: 1838), as well as a novel: *Alethes; or, The Roman Exile* (Saint John: 1840).

17 William Martin Leggett was born at Sussex Vale, New Brunswick in 1813. First a Methodist minister, he joined the Church of England in 1845 and later went to England to live. He published *The Forest Wreath* at Saint John in 1833.

18 William Henry Pope was born at Bedeque, Prince Edward Island on May 29, 1825. Educated in England, he was called to the bar in Prince Edward Island in 1847. He enjoyed a successful political career serving as colonial secretary for the island after 1859 as well as holding a seat in the Legislative Assembly from 1863 to 1873. An advocate of Confederation he was a delegate to both the Charlottetown and Quebec conferences. His *Reminiscences of Prince Edward Island* was published in Liverpool, England in 1848, but seems to have been composed a few years earlier when he had been studying in England. He also edited the *Islander* (Charlottetown) at one time. He died in Prince Edward Island on October 7, 1879.

19 Miss Henrietta Prescott was the daughter of Sir Henry Prescott who served as the governor of Newfoundland from 1834 to 1841. During his period of office, she published in England *Poems, Written in Newfoundland* (London: 1839). She died in 1875.

NOTES ON CHAPTER VI cont'd.

[20] John H. Willis is attributed by Morgan (*Bibliotheca Canadensis*, p. 395) with the authorship of the anonymous volume of *Scraps and Sketches; or, The Album of a Literary Lounger* (Quebec: 1830).

[21] J. G. Ward lived for a time in Montreal where he published several newspaper pieces and *The Spring of Life* in 1834. He later edited the *Reformer* at Cobourg in Upper Canada.

[22] Lynch Lawdon Sharpe, of uncertain origin and destiny, published an anti-Durham satire in the form of a verse drama in 1838. It was entitled *The Viceroy's Dream; or, The Canadian Government not "Wide-Awake."*

[23] Mrs. M. Ethelind Sawtell was the author of a very sentimental volume of verse, *The Mourner's Tribute; or, Effusions of Melancholy Hours* (Montreal: 1840), and was a frequent contributor to the *Literary Garland*.

[24] Standish O'Grady was the author of *The Emigrant* (Montreal: 1842). In the notes of this volume he declared himself to be a one-time Protestant clergyman and graduate of Trinity College, Dublin, who had attempted unsuccessfully to farm near Sorel, Canada East.

[25] The Rev. George Jehoshaphat Mountain, eventual successor to his father as Anglican Bishop of Quebec, was born at Norwich, England on July 27, 1789. He was educated at Cambridge and spent his religious life in Canada, culminating it with the afore-mentioned bishopric in 1837. He held it until his death at Quebec on January 6, 1863. His *Songs of the Wilderness* was published in London in 1846.

[26] David Wylie was born in Scotland on March 23, 1811, and began his career as a journalist in his native country. He emigrated to Canada in 1845 and from 1849 to 1878 he edited and owned the Brockville *Recorder*. A contributor to the *Literary Garland*, he also wrote *Recollections of a Convict* (Montreal: 1847), and *Metrical Waifs from the Thousand Islands* (Brockville: 1869). He died at Brockville on December 21, 1891.

NOTES ON CHAPTER VI cont'd.

[27] F. B. Ryan seems to have been an Irish immigrant. He published a political attack against England, entitled *The Spirit's Lament; or, The Wrongs of Ireland*, at Montreal in 1847.

[28] Nothing further is known of Cotton.

[29] Biographical details are also wanting for Lewis.

[30] Stephen Randal was born in Vermont on January 1, 1804 and was educated in the Eastern Townships of Lower Canada. A protégé of the Bishop of Quebec he came to Upper Canada and was teaching school at Hamilton in 1828. In 1832 he edited the *Hamilton Free Press*, and in 1832-1833 edited a semi-monthly literary journal entitled the *Voyager*. In 1836 at Halliwell, he published briefly *Randal's Magazine*. He died at Stanstead in Lower Canada on April 27, 1841.

[31] Michael Ryan was an occasional contributor to the *Literary Garland* and was mentioned by Mrs. Moodie in the introduction to her novel *Mark Hurdlestone*.

[32] William Kirby was born at Kingston-upon-Hull, England on October 13, 1817. He came to Canada in 1832 with his parents, settling in Niagara seven years later. He edited the Niagara *Mail* for twenty years. *The U. E.* was written several years earlier than its publication (Niagara: 1859). His best known work is the novel, *The Golden Dog* (New York and Montreal: 1877). A charter member of the Royal Society of Canada, he died at Niagara on June 23, 1906.

[33] David Sinclair, ed. *Nineteenth-Century Narrative Poems*. Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1972, p. 87. All other quotations from this volume will be acknowledged by title and page number only at the end of each quotation.

[34] J. Ramsey is unknown, other than as an occasional contributor to the *Literary Garland*.

[35] Henry Scadding was born at Devonshire, England on July 29, 1813 and came to Canada in 1821. He was educated at Upper Canada College, where he later taught, and at Cambridge. He became an Anglican clergyman but always pursued literary and historical interests very actively. He died at Toronto on May 6, 1901.

[36] Thomas MacQueen was born in Ayrshire, Scotland on October 9, 1803. A stone-mason, he emigrated to Canada in 1842. He edited the Reform newspaper, the *Huron Signal*, at Goderich where he died on June 25, 1861. He published three volumes of verse prior to coming to Canada, but only published in periodicals thereafter.

[37] There are no biographical details for Mandeville.

[38] Mrs. H. Silvester was an occasional contributor to the *Literary Garland*.

[39] George Menzies was born in Scotland. In 1840 he founded the Woodstock *Herald*. He edited *Album of the Table Rock, Niagara Falls, C. W., and Sketches of the Falls* (Niagara: 1846) and his widow published *The Posthumous Works of the Late George Menzies* (Woodstock: 1850). He died at Woodstock on March 4, 1847.

[40] In some religious verse of the period, however, intensity was not the product of a sense of *contemptus mundi*, but resulted instead, from an overwhelming and joyful awareness of God's proximity. David Willson affirmed God and Life simultaneously in the following verse:

> My soul is resting on his word,
> His spirit is a rock below,
> My soul from death he hath restor'd,
> He gives me life and blessing too.
> (*Hymns and Prayers For the Children of Sharon*, p. 52)

Willson was a leader of a religious sect called "the Children of Peace" who resided at Sharon, Upper Canada. His *Hymns and Prayers for the Children of Sharon* was published at Newmarket in 1846 and again in 1849. His *Hymns of Praise* was published at Newmarket in 1853.

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